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MARCH 2013 VOLUME 23 ISSUE 3

THE INTERNATIONAL FILM MAGAZINE

Sight & Sound

MEXICO'S BRIGHTEST STAR ON PABLO LARRAIN'S 'NO'

GAEL GARCIA BERNAL

PLUS

PASOLINI • THE TAVIANI BROTHERS'S 'CAESAR MUST DIE' • MONTGOMERY CLIFT
'CLOUD ATLAS' • CATE SHORTLAND'S 'LORE' • 'GANGS OF WASSEYPUR'

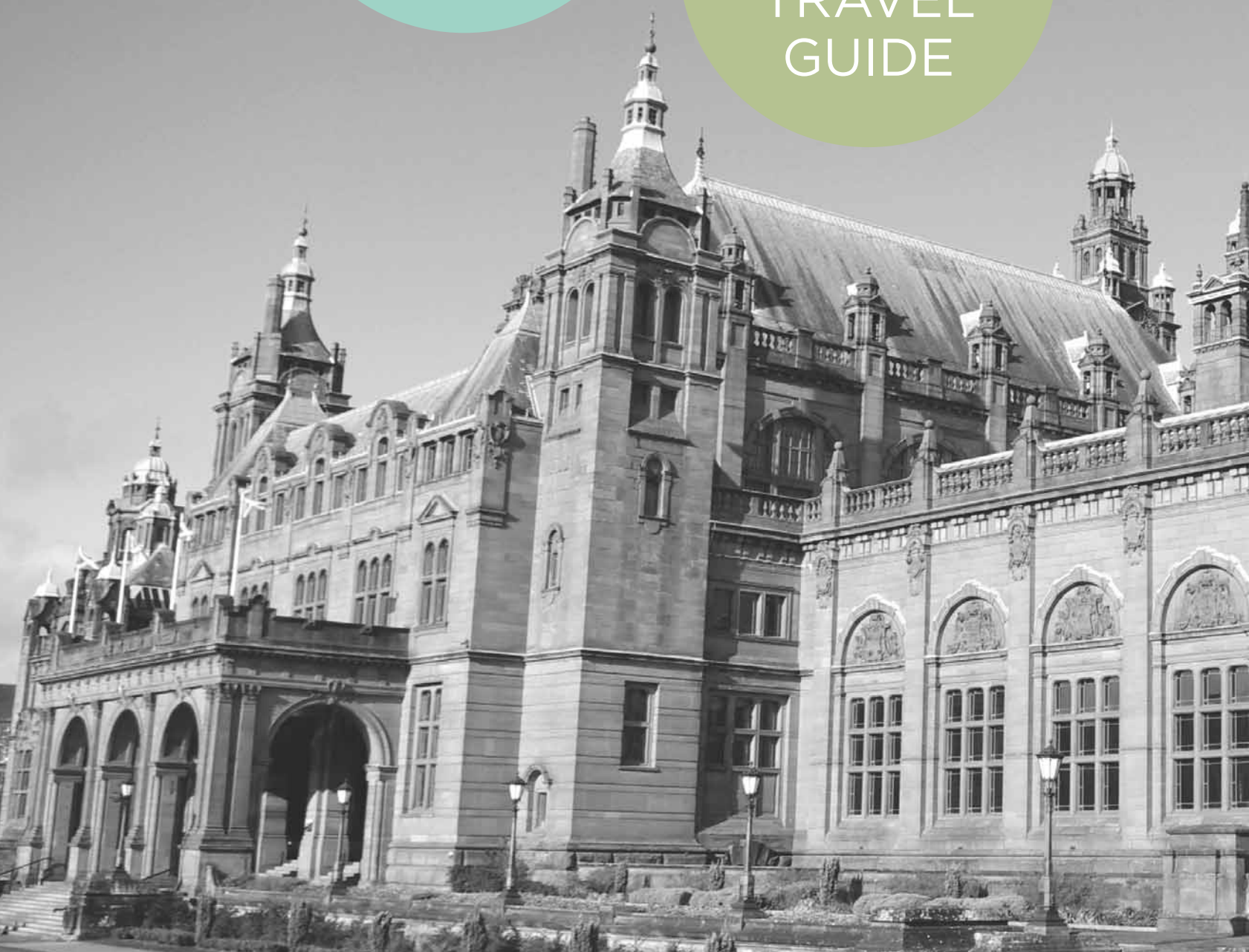
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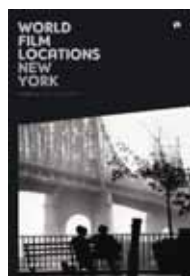
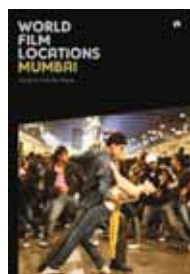


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Welcome



Directors who are hard to pigeonhole are this month's theme. There's Pablo Larraín, who's made *No* (see p.28), a chronicle of the cola-like ad campaign to rid Chile of Pinochet that's nothing like the director's *Tony Manero* or *Post Mortem*. The Taviani brothers' *Caesar Must Die* (p.34), which uses prisoners to act Shakespeare, is anomalous in terms of their substantial canon. Little about Cate Shortland's debut *Somersault* prepared us for *Lore* (p.44), which tracks a teenage girl and her siblings across divided

Germany in 1945. Steven Soderbergh (p.9) and the late Oshima Nagisa (p.15) are also among the most versatile of directors. Yet perhaps the most unfitting to any category is Pier Paolo Pasolini (above and p.38), whose *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* we celebrate here. Add the great British cinematographer Chris Menges (p.52) and standout US actor Montgomery Clift (p.48) and you know there are going to be mavericks at the wheel all the way. Ciao Pier Paolo – nice car! **Nick James**

Ben Affleck Olga Kurylenko Rachel McAdams & Javier Bardem

TO THE WONDER

a film by
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'GLORIOUS... A BOLD AND BEAUTIFUL MOVIE'



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The Independent

'SOUL-STIRRING'



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'RAVISHING'



Variety

Daily Telegraph

'CINEMA SENT FROM THE HEAVENS...'



Little White Lies



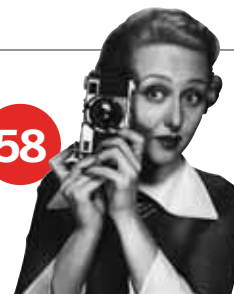
BROTHERS & PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH FILMATION ENTERTAINMENT BEN AFFLECK OLGA KURYLENKO
RACHEL MCADAMS AND JAVIER BARDEM TO THE WONDER — BY HANAN TOWNSHEND — BY A.J. EDWARDS KETH FRASE SHANE HAZEN CHRISTOPHER ROLDAN MARK YOSHIKAWA
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CASTING BY SARAH GREEN NICOLAS GONDA EDITED BY TERRENCE MALICK MUSIC BY



IN CINEMAS FEBRUARY 22

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12A CONTAINS MODERATE
SEX AND NUDITY



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Children of the Damned

Australian director Cate Shortland's *Lore* offers a new angle on Germany at the end of WWII, seen through the eyes of a 15-year-old as she crosses the war-ravaged land. By **Nick James**

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The Future is No

Pablo Larraín completes his Pinochet trilogy with *No*, a portrait of an adman who sells the rejection of the dictator the same way he sells cola. By **Jonathan Romney** PLUS **Mar Diestro-Dópidio** talks to the film's star, Gael García Bernal, and **Kim Newman** surveys how the movies have portrayed the world of advertising

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Honourable Men

After years of neglect by UK distributors, the Taviani brothers are back with their grittiest film yet, *Caesar Must Die*. By **Pasquale Iannone**

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The rerelease of Pasolini's *The Gospel According to Matthew* gives a chance to rediscover this most misunderstood of filmmakers, says **Hannah McGill** PLUS **Mark Cousins** on what his work teaches us

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ONIBABA

[The Demoness] a film by Kaneto Shindō

Kaneto Shindō, one of Japan's most prolific directors, received his biggest international success with the release of *Onibaba* [The Demoness].

SPECIAL FEATURES:

- Gorgeous new 1080p HD transfer • Full-length director's audio commentary by director Kaneto Shindō and the stars of the film, Kei Satō, and Jitsuko Yoshimura • Video introduction by Alex Cox • 8mm footage (40-minutes) shot on location by lead actor Kei Satō
- Optional English subtitles • Original theatrical trailer • Production stills and promotional art gallery • 36-page booklet.

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La città delle donne and *La Poison* also available on DVD.

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One of the great late period films by Sacha Guitry — the total auteur who delighted (and scandalised) the French public and inspired the French New Wave as a model for authorship.

SPECIAL FEATURES:

Beautiful new HD restoration of the film • Newly translated optional English subtitles • *On Life On-Screen: Miseries and Splendour of a Monarch*, a 62-minute documentary from 2010 that explores the film, Sacha Guitry, and Michel Simon • 24-page booklet containing a 1981 piece on the film by Bettina Knapp; 1957 reflections on the film by François Truffaut; the words of Sacha Guitry and Michel Simon; and rare archival imagery.

LA CITTÀ DELLE DONNE

[CITY OF WOMEN]



a film by
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*la
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COVER

Gael García Bernal in 'No'
Retouched by DawkinsColour

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on sale 12 March

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Little White Lies



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The true story of Chile's "Mad Men"
who fought a dictator with happiness

15 Contains strong language

NO



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Editorial Nick James



GOODBYE JANUARY BLUES

As most of you will have guessed, this column is often conjured out of the synchronicity of tangentially related events that seem somehow symptomatic of the everyday state of cinema. This time is no different, except that the link comes down to one word: Sundance. This magazine has always had a distanced relationship with that festival because the costs of sending a staffer there are high, and it has seemed to us that, though there are always crucial films shown, there are not enough of them to justify that expense. Ergo we always use freelancers to write about it (see Festivals p.24). The only advantage of our outsider viewpoint is that we're aware of how Sundance looks from afar, and this year we were struck by an anomaly. From the reviews, Sundance seems to be in the rudest health, and yet coverage in the British press seems to have been reduced substantially (*The Guardian* excepted). A range of factors may have contributed to this: the comparatively parlous state of US indie film production, a resultant cutback in celebrity razzmatazz, the increasing parsimony of British media, the increasing costs of attending US festivals. All of these look like consequences of both the 2008 financial collapse and Hollywood's militantly corporate attitude to its productions. Add to that the package of films that Sundance plans to bring to London, as it did last year, and it may be that some editors here feel they can wait.

So if the dazzle from the Utah mountains seemed dimmer this year, there's a set of plausible reasons why, and I imagine the festival itself won't be too worried, because it's easy for UK audiences to read the mostly glowing US coverage anyway. But what if, in a couple of months, the press treated Cannes with similar indifference? I ask this not because Cannes looks in any way less alluring, but because of a recent statement by Steven Soderbergh, the one-time prince of US indie cinema. In a very fine interview by Mary Kay Schilling (<http://www.vulture.com/2013/01/steven-soderbergh-in-conversation.html>) he said, "I just don't think movies matter as much anymore, culturally."

Soderbergh has directed 26 films, so he's earned a right to say something that strong, especially in the valedictory context of declaring that he won't be making any more. As I write this, his psychological thriller *Side Effects* is about to be released, and his

Steven Soderbergh, the one-time prince of US indie cinema, said in a recent interview, "I just don't think movies matter as much anymore, culturally"



Liberace biopic *Behind the Candelabra* is in the works. But what seems to have marked Soderbergh is his experience with the latter project. It was turned down by every movie studio, and would not have been made had HBO not picked it up. So it seems likely that he has thrown his lot in with television drama. As he puts it, "The audience for the kinds of movies I grew up liking has migrated to television."

It was the young Soderbergh, of course, who put Sundance firmly on the cinephile map in 1989 with his instant indie classic *sex, lies, and videotape*. Though he is anything but whiny in the Schilling interview, his complaint builds to a feeling of marked disillusion with US cinema. Soderbergh hates the "tyranny of narrative", the way movies pander so obviously to the audience; he thinks films are way too long and have become addicted to multiple endings, while music is used "wall-to-wall" like "the vuvuzelas in the last World Cup". But his true bugbear is the lack of respect for directors in Hollywood.

For a while now, lamentation and nostalgia have been rife in the discourse around cinema (not least in these pages). That Soderbergh's measured broadside came just as Sundance 2013 was reaching its conclusion gave it an extra ironic spin. In cinema, of course, the sky is always falling, but there's little doubt that the kind of indie cinema that Soderbergh emerged from has pretty much vanished.

Yet as I write this, I'm getting excited about the Berlinale programme. I'm confident I'll find non-US films there that hate the tyranny of narrative, whose lengths vary wildly, that have one clear ending and a better respect for the use of music. And among those I'll also find many of the best films from Sundance. We've also just experienced one of the most interestingly debated awards seasons I can remember. So it doesn't feel to me like the movies don't matter as much. But January, when Sundance happens and the Soderbergh interview took place, can be a tough month to get through – especially when you've just turned 50, as the director did on the 14th of the month. **S**

IN THE FRAME

MEN OF STEEL



Sparks fly: the 1945 documentary 'Steel' was shot by Jack Cardiff

The reissue of documentaries about the steel industry brings to its climax the BFI's celebration of our industrial heritage

By Michael Brooke

This Working Life, the BFI's three-part themed survey of the British industrial film, comes to a close in 2013 with *Steel*. This and its predecessors, *King Coal* (2009) and *Tales from the Shipyards* (2011), explore pivotal areas of British industrial prowess through a wide range of films, screened at BFI Southbank and elsewhere (in *Steel's* case, the Sheffield Showroom, the Glasgow Film Theatre, the Tyneside Cinema and Cardiff's Chapter Cinema), and also made available online (BFI Mediatheque, Screenonline, YouTube) and on DVD. Following the huge success of the recent Penny Woolcock/British Sea Power collaboration *From the Sea to the Land Beyond*, the BFI is also working with the Sheffield Doc Fest on a similar archive-fuelled project to be scored by legendary Sheffield musicians and premiered this summer.

Steel production not only underpinned much of Britain's industrial revolution but also turns out to be a fabulously filmic and often intensely dramatic subject. Simply filming in a steelworks could be hazardous: in the earlier films, nitrate stock was exposed to dangerously high temperatures, and in 1962 a three-man crew was showered with molten metal, in two cases fatally.

Some big names adorn the credits: director Lewis Gilbert debuted with *The Ten Year Plan* (1945), and world-class cinematographers Jack Cardiff, Wolfgang Suschitzky and Geoffrey Unsworth rub shoulders with lesser-known and sometimes uncredited counterparts. We don't know who made *The Building of the New Tyne Bridge* (1928), sponsored by steelmakers Dorman, Long and Co. to promote their services, but it's an impressively thorough overview, using animation to explain each construction stage before the real thing is shown from sometimes terrifyingly vertiginous camera angles. Other films betray similar sponsorship priorities: *Mastery of Steel* (1933) shows molten pig iron transformed into a Morris Eight car,

Kinoteka Polish Film Festival

Now in its 11th year, the annual Polish film festival boasts discussion events with such giants of Polish cinema as Andrzej Wajda (right) and Krzysztof Zanussi alongside screenings of recent films. Barbican Cinema, London, and venues in Liverpool, Edinburgh and Belfast, 7-17 March.



Glasgow Film Festival

Alongside a range of new films and events, this year's festival includes a James Cagney (right) retrospective, a celebration of New Brazilian Cinema and 'Game Cats Go Miaow!'; a programme curated by comedian Robert Florence celebrating Scotland's passion for gaming.



ON OUR
RADAR



Light industry: 1951 animation 'River of Steel'

while *British Steel* (1939) and *Teeth of Steel* (1942) promoted Britain's industrial skills abroad.


The workers get a voice too, from the pithily eloquent V-sign flicked by a Rotherham steelworker at Mitchell and Kenyon's camera in 1901 via the inhabitants of Stocksbridge (*Steel Town*, 1958) and Consett (*Men of Consett*, 1959 and *Northern Newsreel no.7*, 1987, bookending the closure of its iconic a steelworks) to reminiscences of WWII armaments factory workers (1984's oral history *Women of Steel*).


The project's centrepiece is *Steel* (1945), an overview of the entire steelmaking process that benefits immeasurably from the input of Jack Cardiff, just before he was taken under Michael Powell's wing. Recently restored by the BFI National Archive, it reveals that Technicolor was an ideal medium for capturing the myriad hues undergone by steel as it emerges from glowing baths as white-hot strips before being beaten and shaped into the final product.

All the above (and a fair bit more) is included on the *Steel* DVDs, while the accompanying theatrical screenings play them alongside fiction features *Men of Steel* (1932), *Hard Steel* (1942) and the Children's Film Foundation production *Wings of Mystery* (1963). Television documentary is represented by a pairing of Ken Loach's controversial steel-strike inquest *A Question of Leadership* (1980) and

Philip Donnellan's *Men of Corby* (1961).

BFI curator Ros Cranston has overseen *This Working Life* from its inception, working with colleagues from the BFI National Archive. The films for *Steel* were mostly drawn from the BFI's own collections, with additional input from the Scottish Screen Archive and the National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales. The recent digital video revolution has especially benefited non-fiction archive films, since titles that previously struggled to be seen via more conventional distribution channels prove ideally suited to new media.

Patrick Russell, senior non-fiction curator at the BFI National Archive, elaborates: "Those of us who've worked on *This Working Life* have always thought of it as a central plank of a grand unfolding project – revisiting film heritage, to enable its reinterpretation on multiple levels. These films are often more meaningful to much of the general public than an art-film classic, and they've acquired immense socio-economic interest as artefacts of an industrial age. Last but not least, they've expanded the canon. That documentary, industrial, newsreel and political films played a huge part in the story of British cinema and TV is increasingly appreciated." 

 **The season 'This Working Life: Steel' plays at BFI Southbank, London throughout February, before touring other cities**

ANATOMY OF A MOVIE CLOUD ATLAS

16%	<i>Intolerance</i> (1916)
15%	<i>Blade Runner</i> (1982)
14%	<i>The China Syndrome</i> (1978)
12%	<i>The Saragossa Manuscript</i> (1965)
10%	<i>Waterworld</i> (1995)
8%	<i>One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest</i> (1975)
7%	<i>Amadeus</i> (1984)
7%	<i>Amistad</i> (1997)
6%	<i>Brazil</i> (1985)
5%	<i>Star Wars 1 The Phantom Menace</i> (1999)



QUOTE OF THE MONTH JOSEF VON STERNBERG

"Few are aware of the contribution made by the apparently invisible to the visible. To photograph a human being properly, all that surrounds him must definitely add to him, or it will do nothing but subtract."

From his autobiography 'Fun in a Chinese Laundry' (1965)



The Hippodrome Festival of Silent Cinema in Falkirk
Scotland's only silent-film festival presents a five-day programme in the country's oldest purpose-built cinema. Films include Gloria Swanson in 'Stage Struck' (right), with live piano by Neil Brand, and 'The Goose Woman'. 13-17 March.



André Bazin
The past few years have seen a resurgence of interest in the great French critic and founder of 'Cahiers du cinéma' (right), which has prompted a new, extensively revised edition of Dudley Andrew's widely acclaimed 1978 intellectual biography. The book is published this month by Oxford University Press.



B.S. Johnson
The cult British novelist and poet, perhaps best known for his book 'Christie Malry's Own Double-Entry', was also a filmmaker, and his rare output is now collected for the first time on the BFI Flipside DVD 'You're Human Like the Rest of Them', which is in shops in April.



KEEPING IT UNDER THEIR HAT

The fantasy of the cowboy hat as a stand-in for uncomplicated masculinity and earthy purity ignores a darker reality



By Hannah McGill

Like countless characters of her age group in literature and film, the teenage protagonist of *Margaret* (2008) rails shrilly

against the iniquities of the adult world. It would have been simple for writer/director Kenneth Lonergan to follow rites-of-passage movie convention by giving Lisa (Anna Paquin) access to a degree of honest virtue sadly hardened in the adults around her. That, indeed, is the broad message of the Gerard Manley Hopkins poem, *Spring and Fall*, from which the title *Margaret* is drawn: that childhood's purity of feeling is but short-lived. But in one of its many snubs to convention, Lonergan's film shows Lisa's righteousness and insight as misfiring weapons. Sometimes she's as direct and profound as any of Holden Caulfield's inheritors; but sometimes she's cruel, manipulative, wrong. She gropes for moral clarity, but rarely grasps it. It's as elusive as the cowboy hat for which she's scouring the Upper West Side when she calls out to a bus driver to find out where he got his, distracting him and causing him to hit and kill a pedestrian.

Lisa wants the hat for a trip she's going on with her father, a loving but nervy movie-biz type (played by Lonergan himself) who lives apart from her mother, on the West Coast. Lisa's doubts regarding her father's reliability are in her phrasing: "My dad's supposed to take me and my brother horseback riding," she tells a friend, "at this ranch in New Mexico." Her pursuit of what she pertly calls "the appropriate equestrian paraphernalia" suggest an effort to minimise the significance of the trip by making it a game of dress-up, but also a bid to commit to it and make it real. That Lisa sees riding as somehow indicative of authenticity is emphasised later when, in a coy exchange with the young maths teacher she fancies, she assumes aloud that being from "Texas or Wyoming or somewhere... you know, not New York," he must be comfortable in the saddle. Perhaps it's losing her dad to Hollywood that's done it, but Lisa has absorbed a potent American creation myth of which the longed-for hat is a neat symbol: cowboys as emblems of uncomplicated, effective masculinity; the urban, especially New York, as suspect; escape to the wilderness as the flight from inevitable compromise to earthy purity.

It's the same fantasy that powers the male mid-life-crisis comedy *City Slickers* (1991); that curdles in *The Misfits* (1961); even that makes Woody the warm, innocent choice of companion over high-tech Buzz Lightyear in *Toy Story* (1995). It's why Thelma and Louise adopt cowboy hats on their odyssey to freedom, and Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush were so keen on donning



Riding high: Daniel Stern, Billy Crystal and Bruno Kirby in the mid-life crisis comedy 'City Slickers'

them for publicity shots. The association of the cowboy hat with unpretentious frankness and American patriotism is associated with the role played by cow herders in the establishment of the earliest European settlements on US soil. But it resists the fact that 'cowboy' was at the time of the American Revolution a slang term for a supporter of the British side against independence; the powerful association of cowboys not just with rough-hewn individualism but with black marketeering, smuggling and theft (which gave the UK its 'cowboy' tradesmen); and the

negative racial and colonial connotations of the cowboys and Indians archetype.

Both sides of the cowboy persona – creepy, corrupt redneck, and unspoiled man of the land – show in the flickering electric light under which *Mulholland Dr's* hipster film director Adam (Justin Theroux) meets his most enigmatic contact, Cowboy. Played by Lynch's sometime producer Monty Montgomery, this figure assails Adam with down-home epigrams, accusations of being a "smart aleck" and exhortations to "fix his attitude"; but his requirements of Adam involve dropping his artistic pretensions and going along with the designs of the Mafiosi who are trying to lasso his movie. This cowboy preaches sincerity, but demands compromise. Along with the witchy Coco and Louise, played by Old Hollywood alumnae Ann Miller and Lee Grant, he tends to be seen by *Mulholland Dr's* many decoders as an emblem of the industrial, functional Hollywood that got on with business instead of futzing around with art.

The same strange doublethink – American innocence and American corruption as two sides of the same silver dollar – attends the frequent use of the cowboy hat as a stripper's or glamour model's accoutrement. The



Top hat: Cowboy in 'Mulholland Dr'



Both sides of the cowboy persona – creepy, corrupt redneck and unspoiled man of the land – are seen in David Lynch's Cowboy

'Playmate of the Year' in the excised Playboy bunnies sequence in *Apocalypse Now* (1979), played by Cynthia Wood, wears cowboy drag, complete with six-shooters. The trademark routine of the stripper king played by Matthew McConaughey in Steven Soderbergh's *Magic Mike* (2012) – who's both the honest counterpoint to Channing Tatum's corruptible Mike, and the influence that leads him into harm's way – has him in cowboy regalia too.

In *Margaret*, Lisa's family horse-riding trip gets cancelled. Her teacher (who's actually from Indiana) betrays her too. Just as her view of American foreign policy as the necessary control of "sick monsters" who "drop bombs on women and children" can be swiftly dismantled in a politics class, so Lisa's cowboy fantasy has become one more sacrifice to the web of misunderstandings and unreliable loyalties that keeps her from riding – symbolic hat firmly in place – into a nice, decisive western sunset. ☺

THE FIVE KEY...

MAX OPHULS FILMS

The 60th-anniversary rerelease of *Madame de...* gives us an excuse to revisit the all-time master of the travelling camera



By James Bell

"The camera exists to create a new art – to show what can't be seen elsewhere, neither in theatre nor in life," said Max Ophüls, and few

directors have ever done more to explore the expressive possibilities of the moving camera. Ophüls's balletically choreographed style was never more perfectly realised than in his 1953 film *Madame de...*, which the BFI are releasing back into UK cinemas from 15 February. Here we choose five key films from a career studded with shining masterpieces.



2 *La signora di tutti* (1934)

The exiled Ophüls spent most of the 1930s in France, but went to Italy to make this stylistically dazzling and passionate melodrama, told in flashback, about the beautiful and innocent Gaby Doriot (a radiant, soulful 19-year-old Isa Miranda at the start of her career) who brings only tragedy and death to those around her.



4 *Madame de...* (1953)

Ophüls returned to France in 1950 and began the greatest period of his career. Following the masterful *La Ronde* and *Le Plaisir* he made what Andrew Sarris called "the most perfect film ever made", his camera moving with exquisite grace as it traces the fortunes of a countess (Danielle Darrieux) after she sells a pair of earrings.



1 *Liebelei* (1933)

Based on Arthur Schnitzler's play about a doomed love affair, Ophüls's fourth feature was his first masterpiece and, despite its relatively restrained camera, his first truly characteristic film. However the burning of the Reichstag just before the film opened meant that the Jewish Ophüls, realising the new dangers, fled Germany.



3 *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (1948)

Following the fall of France Ophüls travelled to Hollywood, but work was slow in coming. His third American film is the greatest story of unrequited love in cinema, starring Joan Fontaine as a woman hopelessly in love with a philanderer (Louis Jourdan) who has long forgotten her after a fleeting encounter.



5 *Lola Montès* (1955)

Ophüls's only film in colour and CinemaScope, *Lola Montès* was received with hostility on its first release, and was subsequently butchered by its producers in the editing room. Its reputation as a great *film maudit* endured and a partial restoration was made in 1968, but only in 2008 was the film restored to its full magnificence.



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FILMS

OSHIMA NAGISA (1932–2013)

The director's militant refusal to fit in was reflected in his films, which sought to shock his audiences into seeing themselves more clearly

By Tony Rayns

Oshima Nagisa's death from pneumonia on 15 January ended a long silence, enforced on him by the stroke he suffered – while in transit at Heathrow Airport – in 1996. By sheer force of will he recovered enough to write and direct *Gohatto* in 1999, but once the film was finished he relapsed and retired from public life. He's consequently much less well known now than he was in the 1960s and 1970s; several of his best films have never been published as subtitled DVDs, and so an entire generation has grown up knowing little or nothing of who he was or why he was great.

In conformist Japan, Oshima was the ultimate contrarian. His refusals and rebellions were legion. Reading law and political science at Kyoto University, one of the best in the country, he was active in the protest movement against the first US-Japan Security Treaty. He served a conventional apprenticeship at Shochiku, but quit the company when it withdrew his fourth feature from distribution after a few days; the film was *Night and Fog in Japan* (1960), a vehement dissection of the schism between the old Left and the new Left which used startlingly original elements of stylisation. The break with Shochiku sparked a sideline as a 'public intellectual': he became well known to everyone in Japan as a writer and broadcast commentator on politics and culture, always challenging the Japanese 'consensus' view and attacking hypocrisy, critical of both the Left and the Right. He even hosted a TV show in which women discussed their sexual problems and frustrations. In a wonderful pen-portrait in his book *Different People*, Donald Richie recalls how Oshima, roaring drunk on a public stage, typically remembered to say "this country" (*kono kuni*) rather than the conventional "our country" (*waga kuni*).

The first industry director of his generation to go freelance, he was also the first to make TV documentaries – and an indie short – while setting up his own company, and the first to negotiate a co-production deal with the tiny Art Theatre Guild, enabling him to make a string of brilliant indie features. In the 1970s, after turning his back on Japanese film culture entirely, he began accepting foreign financing to make films in Japan: *In the Realm of the Senses* (1976) and *Empire of Passion* (1978). More 'foreign' projects followed: *Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence* (1982) and *Max Mon Amour* (1986); and then in the 1990s two essay-films for British TV, one for the BBC, the other for the BFI/Channel 4. It seems clear that he would never have returned to the Japanese film industry to make *Gohatto* if he hadn't had the stroke.

Oshima's militant refusal to fit in was of course reflected in his films, many of which focus on characters who either find themselves marginalised or choose to opt out. Oshima



Rebel with a cause: Oshima Nagisa

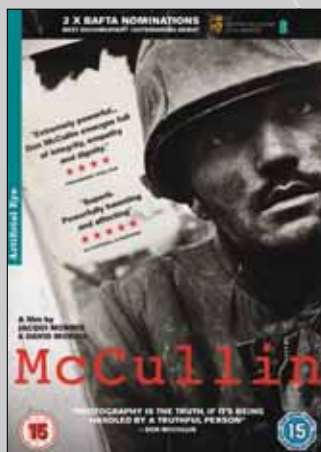
himself was neither dissolute nor criminal, but he identified sex and crime as the twin fault-lines in Japanese society and explored both in almost everything he made, hoping always to shock his audiences into seeing themselves more clearly. He also empathised rather deeply with Koreans, Japan's most discriminated-against minority: *A Treatise on Japanese Bawdy Song* (1967) argues that the 'Japanese' originally came from Korea, and the dark comedy *Three Resurrected Drunkards* (1968) plays the *Spartacus* card with a vox-pop sequence in which every respondent – including Oshima himself – claims to be Korean. His later desire to test the extent of his own latent gayness, *passim* but most notably in *Mr. Lawrence* and *Gohatto*, gave his sexual provocations a delicious twist.

As Japan swings back to the hard Right and confrontations with China and Korea loom over ownership of various rocky outcrops in the

North Pacific, the political thrust of Oshima's work inevitably loses its edge. (His battles against Japan's censors, though, are largely won.) What will last is his sense of cinema, especially when DVD publishers follow the fan subtitlers in rereleasing the masterpieces he made with ATG: the searing black comedy *Death By Hanging* (1968), the prescient counter-culture collage *Diary of a Shinjuku Thief* (1968), the deceptively realistic *Boy* (1969) and the devastating analysis of Japan's post-war history across a series of family gatherings in *The Ceremony* (1971), amongst others.

Oshima was the master director who resisted becoming an 'auteur'. The greatest of all his refusals was the refusal to develop a 'personal' style. Each film was radically different from the others; each was given a format, a form and a style appropriate to the subject and the tone. This diversity went hand-in-hand with his antipathy to genre movies, and during his most prolific period it freed him to deliver constant surprises. It's hard now to imagine a director balancing intelligence and sensuality, anger and humour, and coming up with something fresh every time. But that's the way it was with Oshima. 📺

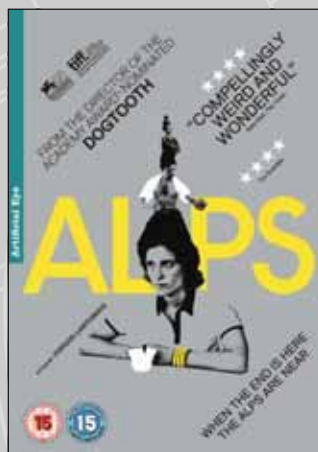
*In conformist Japan
Oshima was the ultimate
contrarian. His refusals and
rebellions were legion*



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STILL LIFE WITH ATTITUDE

Portrait movies rely on colour and music to paint a picture rather than spin a yarn, staying still while time rolls on



By Mark Cousins

Most of my films so far have been road movies. *Another Journey by Train* was about taking neo-Nazis to Auschwitz; *The First*

Movie was about going to Iraqi Kurdistan; *The Story of Film: An Odyssey* went around the world looking at film style; *What Is This Film Called Love?* was about three days walking in Mexico City; and the film I've just finished, *Here Be Dragons*, is about a trip to Albania.

All but the first of these has been edited by Timo Langer. For four years we have sat together in an edit suite trying to spin stories like threads. Last week Timo and I started to cut our new film, *A Story of Children and Film*. This time, something was different. The sequences in my head weren't lining up one after the other. Each didn't call forth the next. I wasn't sure why, but I could tell that Paul Cézanne had something to do with it. I've been reading a new book about the painter recently, and scribbling a lot in its margins. When we started editing the new picture, instead of sticking up on the wall my usual time line, I pinned up Cézanne's painting *The Garden at Les Lauves* of 1906.

Then it dawned on me that our new film is a portrait movie rather than a road movie. It's trying to paint a picture rather than spin a yarn. It'll show the range of emotions of childhood rather than, say, kids growing up. The portrait film isn't a phrase that I've heard much. I love Scottish director Margaret Tait's short movie *A Portrait of Ga*, but is, for example, *Grey Gardens* a portrait film? Are the immobile movies of Polanski and Haneke portraits of places and people rather than stories? Satyajit Ray used to say that he liked his movies to reflect the world in their microcosms, so maybe they are portraits?

The most obvious example of cine-portraiture is Víctor Erice's *The Quince Tree Sun*, about a man standing in the same spot, painting a quince. But what about a film like *Last Tango in Paris*? It's about two people who, presumably, are on the road in the rest of their lives but who get off it when they get together to have sex or spar. It's no surprise that some of the film's imagery and compositions were inspired by Francis Bacon paintings, which appear in *Last Tango's* opening sequence. Visually, this film is connected to Ingmar Bergman's *Cries and Whispers*, another film set in rooms whose blood red walls provide its primary affect. Just as the painter Whistler's portrait of his mother is called *Arrangement in Grey and Black No. 1*, both *Last Tango in Paris* and *Cries and Whispers* could be called *Study in Red*.

But portrait movies aren't only, or even primarily, about colour. Think of the night-time scene in the boat in *Jaws*, when Quint



Movie cubism: the shower scene in 'Psycho'

tells his gripping USS Indianapolis story. This works so well because of the quality of the writing and Robert Shaw's acting but, in formal terms, the film stops moving during it. The space is parked, but time keeps running, for quite a while – this isn't a short scene. So in portrait films, off-road films, space and time become polarised. One keeps running and the other slows down or stops.

This might not make much film critic-y sense but, sitting where I am right now, in our edit suite, it makes creative sense. When George Tomasini and Alfred Hitchcock were editing *Psycho*, they knew that a scene like the one where Janet Leigh, in her car, is unsettled by a policeman had to find its correct story place. Too early in the film and it would overaccelerate her growing unease. Too late and that unease might have peaked, or she might have decided to return the money she's stolen. They were road-movie editing. But in the shower scene they switch, for a short period, to portraiture editing. Their short shots accumulate as Cézanne's brush strokes do, or Georges Braque's – not in time exactly, more in space. They see the young naked woman from many angles, almost at once. They take a walk

around her rather than taking her for a walk (or drive) as they had done earlier in the film.

Is this a definition of the portrait film – one where the observed stays still and the observer moves? That feels right. And if so, does that mean that David Lynch's *Inland Empire* is a portrait film? It doesn't move its people and world on so much as bolt annexes, parallel worlds, onto them. It's a film of tumours, rumours, humours, outgrowths from a constant centre. *Inland Empire* is like one very long *Psycho* shower scene. The positioning of its sequences, like the order of the shots in the shower scene, is not determined by the story engine. They could work at several points in the movie. They're not where they are because of logic but because of tonality, a bit like Cézanne's *petites sensations*.

Here's another thing about the portrait film: today I realised that, for the first time in my work, we've been using, in the edit, the same piece of music several times. In the absence of a linear story which, like a ride in a car, affords its own wind-in-the-hair orientation, a portrait film still needs structure and some signposting. If your signposting isn't in the form of the word 'then', or its filmic equivalent, then you need to provide other markers. Musical leitmotifs are markers, indications to the person watching the film that it hasn't drifted off piste, that it's still walking around the same subject. The best example I can think of this use of music as structural device in a film where story structure isn't on the straight and narrow is in Stanley Donen's *Two for the Road*, written by Frederic Raphael. It is movie cubism in that it intercuts several journeys taken by a couple, at different points and moods in their marriage, yet Henry Mancini's famous musical theme (which accrued the lyrics "if you're feeling fancy free, come wander through the world with me") recurs throughout, tolling them back to their sole selves. *Two for the Road* is a very un-road-movie road movie.

And to speak of it brings to mind one of the greatest portrait films structured by music and colour, Wong Kar-Wai's *In the Mood for Love*. Cézanne would have loved it. ☺

The most obvious example of cine-portraiture is Víctor Erice's 'The Quince Tree Sun', about a man painting a quince



Still life: Víctor Erice's 'The Quince Tree Sun'

DEVELOPMENT TALE

BREAKING POINT



'Broken', starring Cillian Murphy, explores modern Britain through the prism of three neighbouring families living on a suburban street

When the suburban drama *Broken* won best film at last year's BIFAs, it marked the culmination of a five-year struggle to reach the screen

By Charles Gant

At the British Independent Film Awards last December, as the cast and crew of *Broken* congregated on stage to accept the prize for best film, the note of celebration was tinged with relief. For theatre director Rufus Norris, making his feature-film debut, and producer Dixie Linder, the BIFAs triumph felt like validation after a five-year journey that had seen financing collapse, cast changes, a drastic budget reduction and then – as *Broken* premiered at Cannes in May – a hostile review from a key critic that could have sent faint-hearted UK distributors scurrying in the opposite direction.

Norris was already taking meetings with a view to making a move into feature films when the unpublished manuscript of Daniel Clay's novel *Broken* was passed to him in 2007 by Nick Marston, his agent at Curtis Brown. Cuba, the London talent agency's production arm, had

already set screenwriter Mark O'Rowe (*Boy A*) to adapt Clay's book, with development funding from BBC Films. Norris enthusiastically signed on, responding to Clay's vision of modern Britain refracted through three families on an English suburban street. Linder (*The War Zone*) also climbed aboard, first establishing a bond with Norris by producing his short *King Bastard*.

Broken suffered an 18-month hiatus when it was pipped at the post by rival projects for the next batch of BBC Films production investment, and then Norris was unavailable due to theatre commitments. But the BBC remained committed, and Linder remembers being in the extraordinary position of closing the financing months before principal photography. "We were in the lawyer's office," she says, "and they were like, 'I don't think we've ever been able to close on a film this early.' And we were all sitting there thinking, 'I know, isn't this great?' Cut to an actor pulling out, losing £2 million and key investors, and scrambling together to get enough money for it. We had a couple of horrible meetings where we just didn't think the film was going to happen."

Complicating matters was *Broken*'s summer setting – most of the drama occurs as a 11-year-old Skunk (newcomer Eloise Laurence) passes

the summer holiday before secondary school. Linder had calculated that a mid-September start at latest was essential if leaves were going to be on trees, and it was already May 2011 when the financing fell apart and the film lost its sales agent. With the clock ticking, Linder went back to Wild Bunch, who'd originally lost out in the bidding war to represent *Broken*: "Someone from Wild Bunch did say to me, 'So we offered you a fantastic advance, which you turned down, and now you're coming back, with not the same cast, and I'm on holiday, and you're asking me to be quick.' Point taken."

Norris found the vagaries of film financing confounding. "With theatre," he explains, "if an artistic director rang me and said, 'Do you want to do this play in 2015?', I might say, 'Yeah, I do. When would it start rehearsing?' 'September 4.' 'OK, when does it open?' 'October 28.' I'd say, 'I want another week's rehearsing.' 'OK, we'll start a bit earlier'... That's in a phone conversation. I know for absolute 100 per cent certain that that is going to happen. End of story. I'm talking about subsidised theatre. To move into a movie situation, where even in the week before, the whole thing can collapse, it's hard to get your head round.

"All that was going on, with the budget moving at one point from £3.5m to £750,000, and calls from people saying, 'I've got a good idea: why don't we film it in America, but let's delay it for another year...'. It had already moved three times, and I'd lost a lot of theatre work as a result. I was just really desperate to get to a situation where I felt it was back in my hands."


Luckily, Norris's theatre success had created a vital relationship that now came to his rescue: impresario and Everton FC chairman Bill Kenwright, who had produced the West End transfer of the director's *Festen*, and then *Cabaret* and *The Country Girl*. "We get on very well," says Norris. "We've been through a lot of battles. You have a lot of trust, which enables you to phone up and go, 'Mate, I need two hundred grand.'" This was in late August 2011, with pre-production imminent, so the timing wasn't great for Kenwright.

"The transfer window ended on August 31, and we called him on August 28," Linder recalls. "He was amazing. He was very true to his word, and he basically saved the production." The BFI Film Fund also came on board at that time (just a couple of weeks before it was announced that its head Tanya Seghatchian was stepping down). With principal photography beginning in mid-October, Linder missed the deadline she'd set herself for a summer look, but the weather gods were kind, and the production enjoyed sunnier skies than if they'd postponed until the rainy summer of 2012.

With a trimmed shooting schedule, fees

We had a couple of horrible meetings where we just didn't think the film was going to happen

deferred, and a cast including Tim Roth, Cillian Murphy and Rory Kinnear, Norris was able to make the film at the reduced budget – in the mid £1-2 million range – and Wild Bunch could cashflow without pre-sales. But the decision to premiere *Broken* in Cannes without assigning UK distribution rights seemed a miscalculation when *The Guardian's* Peter Bradshaw gave his "strained, desperately self-conscious" verdict, since the paper's support is often viewed as critical for the success of an independent film in this country. But UK distributor StudioCanal was undaunted, and its faith was encouraged with a warm reception at the London Film Festival, followed by success at the BIFAs.

Despite all the financing dramas, Linder reflects, "I don't think the film would be any different. I think we have absolutely made the film we wanted to make." Norris, meanwhile, appreciates the free hand in casting afforded by the lower-budget fiscal model: "When we reached the bottom, for me it was a high point, because I went, 'Now I know where we are: cut my fee, cut your fee, cut this, cut that.' And then you get energised. Enough people have got off the aeroplane for us to know that we can get it in the air." 

 **'Broken' is released in the UK on 8 March, and is reviewed on page 90**

THE NUMBERS THE LIFE OF PI

By Charles Gant

With an estimated production budget of \$120m and on the back of the local popularity of Yann Martel's novel, the UK division of Twentieth Century Fox certainly hoped to deliver big box-office on *Life of Pi*. But the film, starring untested teen actor Suraj Sharma, also represented a risk.

Explains Fox UK boss Cameron Saunders, "The real fear at the start was making the most expensive arthouse movie ever made. What Booker Prize judges like often isn't very popular, but we always knew *Life of Pi* was a story that had captured people's imaginations and we had a lot of faith in our director."

When setting a release strategy and marketing budget, Fox, as always, attempted to look at previous comparative releases. "At the very top, you have *Titanic*, because a boat sinks," says Saunders. "*Slumdog Millionaire* was probably the closest comp, because we knew it was going to be great filmmaking, run into the awards corridor, have an ethnic slant, and it was a challenging film that could appeal to audiences. *Cast Away*, we don't have Tom Hanks, but we do have Ang Lee and a tiger. At the bottom end we had *Hugo*, which should have done much better than it did. *Hugo* is a film which should appeal to all audiences, from a great director, with a sophistication to it. Sometimes, if you can't comp your film, it means you are falling between stools, and it won't work for that reason. People don't quite know what to make of it. *Pi* was seen as a film with a high-risk approach, but often high risk can be high return. Playing it safe can often be the most dangerous strategy – you are guaranteed an average result."

Unlike the 2012 awards race, when *The Artist* typified a relatively commercially modest field of contenders, 2013 has seen Best Picture Oscar nominees *Lincoln*, *Django Unchained*, *Les Misérables*, *Argo* and *Life of Pi* all crack \$100m in the US, with *Silver Linings Playbook* and *Zero Dark Thirty* not



Taking a slice: 'Life of Pi'

far behind. But it's Ang Lee's 3D spectacle that has really made waves internationally, with a stunning \$400m outside the US, including £26m in the UK. (Given a US gross of just over \$100m, you might normally expect a UK total around £10m.)

Says Saunders, "In our market, we dated it at Christmas for a reason, because we felt it was an all-audience event movie which has got something in it for everyone. My 12-year-old son, he said genuinely, 'That's the best film I've ever seen.' *Battle LA* and *Transformers* previously set the standard of filmmaking for him. I think audiences are smarter than we make them out to be. There's a role for the big franchise pictures, but more creatively driven titles like *Inception* and *Life of Pi*, they are proving there's an appetite audiences have to be challenged."

ANG LEE AT THE UK/IRELAND BOX OFFICE

Film	Year	Gross
Life of Pi	2012	£25,957,044*
Sense and Sensibility	1996	£13,632,700
Brokeback Mountain	2006	£10,113,585
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	2001	£9,374,625
Hulk	2003	£8,427,089
The Ice Storm	1998	£1,234,627
Lust, Caution	2008	£1,071,378
Eat Drink Man Woman	1995	£476,215
The Wedding Banquet	1993	£450,956
Ride with the Devil	1999	£236,360
Taking Woodstock	2009	£121,638

*still on release

DOWN BUT NOT OUT



Shutter island: in 2012, more than 78 per cent of consumer expenditure on home cinema was on discs

Despite HMV's recent woes, many believe the firm has a future and claim there is still a viable market for DVDs on the high street

By Geoffrey Macnab

When venerable retailer HMV went into administration in mid-January, the UK distribution sector reacted with absolute dismay. If HMV were to disappear, distributors realised, so would a large part of their revenue.

This may be a brave new age of internet-enabled DVD players, smart phones, tablets and movies on demand, but a surprising number of British consumers still like to shop for films on the high street – and HMV stores are where they go to buy them. According to the British Video Association (BVA), in 2012 physical discs (as opposed to downloads) still accounted for more than 78 per cent of consumer expenditure in the £2.3 billion video market.

All the same, HMV had been teetering for months. Music and film companies had been propping it up – and seem determined to continue doing so. Distributors continued to supply HMV stores with films in the run-up to Christmas, despite knowing from painful experience with Woolworth that if the business folded, they might never see any of the revenue from the discs HMV sold on their behalf.

Looking forward, distributors with mainstream titles predict they will lose five to ten per cent of sales and revenues on their films if they no longer have HMV as an outlet. For catalogue titles and more esoteric fare, the losses will be far more severe. "I think the bigger effect will be on the library product

A surprising number of British consumers still like to shop for films on the high street – and HMV is where they go

where HMV was pretty much 50 per cent of the market, certainly for independent films," suggests Vertigo's Rupert Preston.

Like many observers, Preston points to the importance of the casual browsers who drop into HMV stores and buy films on impulse. This kind of browsing can't be replicated online. "If you're online, you're much clearer," he says. "You go on there to buy something specific."

There are contrasting perspectives about the reasons why HMV's business is in such a bad way. Some accuse the chain of overexpansion and chronic mismanagement. A more generous analysis suggests HMV was simply caught up in the storms buffeting the high street as a whole as a result of online competition and the economic slump.

At the time of writing, HMV's chances of survival look reasonably bright. Private-equity firm Hilco has already taken control of the troubled company, buying up its reported £176 million debt from the banks. "Hilco believes there to be a viable underlying HMV business," the company said in a statement.

The hope among UK distributors is that HMV will now be reorganised as a leaner, stronger operation. "The BVA sincerely hopes that... the value of this important retailer can be realised so that a restructure will enable the best performing stores to continue trading," says Lavinia Carey, director general of the BVA.

Whatever happens, there is bound to be a further migration of sales from the high street to online retailers led by Amazon. Even so, DVD and Blu-Ray as sell-through formats are still showing a surprising resilience. There is continuing wariness about video on demand; consumers simply don't yet have the confidence that streaming or downloading a movie is the most convenient way to see it.

"VOD is growing and there are more operators in that market," Preston says. He accepts that the DVD market is declining – but argues that the rate of decline is slower than many anticipated. "With the right film, the DVD market is pretty buoyant," he insists. ☺

IN PRODUCTION

● **Fanny Ardant** is following her directorial debut 'Ashes and Blood' with the family drama 'Cadences Obscures'. The story reportedly focuses on the marital tensions between a cellist and an architect. Portuguese star Nuno Lopes, Italian Asia Argento and new Russian citizen Gérard Depardieu are attached to star.

● **J. J. Abrams** has been hired by Disney to direct the next instalment of the 'Star Wars' saga, following the studio's acquisition of George Lucas's LucasFilm in 2012. The creator of 'Lost' has already proved his credentials as far as reinvigorating multi-billion dollar sci-fi franchises is concerned, after directing 2009's 'Star Trek' film to critical acclaim and to the general satisfaction of Trekkies the world over. Confirmation that Abrams is to direct the film follows months of speculation, with names including Guillermo Del Toro, Brad Bird and Matthew Vaughn previously rumoured. 'Star Wars: Episode VII' is being scripted by Michael Arndt, writer of 'Little Miss Sunshine' and 'Toy Story 3'.

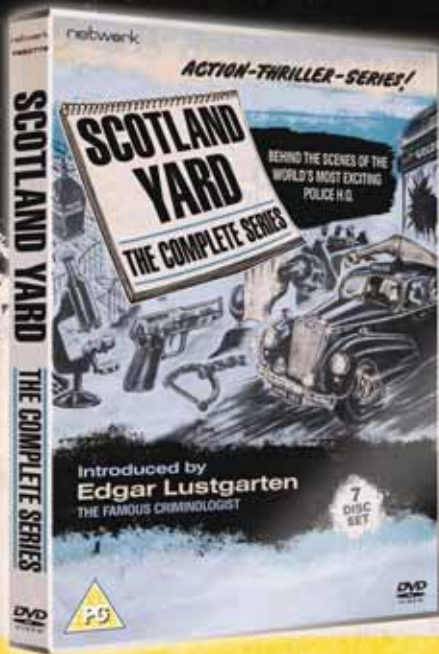
● **Andrei Zvyagintsev**, the acclaimed Russian director of 'Elena' and 'The Return', has been discussing his new project in interviews with the Russian press. Shooting on the provincial town drama, which has a working title of 'Leviathan', is due to start this year and will feature an uncharacteristically large cast for the director of about 10 to 12 people.

● **Atom Egoyan** is due to start shooting his next film 'Queen of the Night' this month. Reportedly a thriller based on an original screenplay co-written by Egoyan together with David Fraser, Ryan Reynolds and Rosario Dawson are lined up to star.

● **Paul Thomas Anderson** (below) is reportedly to reteam with 'The Master' star Joaquin Phoenix for 'Inherent Vice', a story about a 1960's pot-smoking Los Angeles detective named Larry 'Doc' Sportello based on Thomas Pynchon's darkly comic 2009 novel.



● **Neil Gaiman's** dark 2008 children's fantasy novel 'The Graveyard Book', about a baby who crawls away from his house following the murder of his parents and winds up in a graveyard where he is raised by ghosts and monsters, is reportedly to be brought to the screen by the unlikely figure of Ron Howard. Neil Jordan's name was initially attached to the project, then 'Nightmare Before Christmas' director Henry Selick was rumoured to be planning a stop-motion animation adaptation, but the project was abandoned last summer.

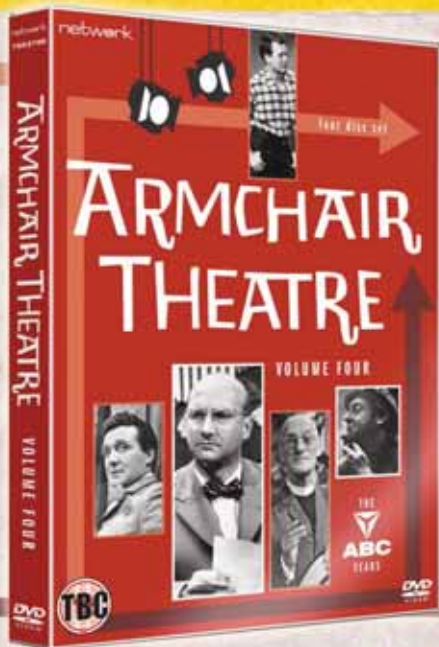


- Introduced by famed author **Edgar Lustgarten**.
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- The highly successful sister series to SCALES OF JUSTICE.
- Stars include **Harry H. Corbett**, **Peter Bowles**, and **Robert Raglan**.

From film to DVD on 14th January.

- ITV's seminal 60s arts programme.
- The pre-cursor to AQUARIUS and THE SOUTH BANK SHOW.
 - Unseen for decades – interviews, reportage and features.
- Burgeoning talents of **Mike Hodges**, **Trevor Preston** and **Kenneth Tynan** behind the camera.
- Featuring exclusive interviews with **Orson Welles**, **Jacques Tati**, **Harold Pinter** and **Zero Mostel**.
- Featuring a never before seen episode on drugs that was banned twice.

2-disc set available on DVD from 21st January.



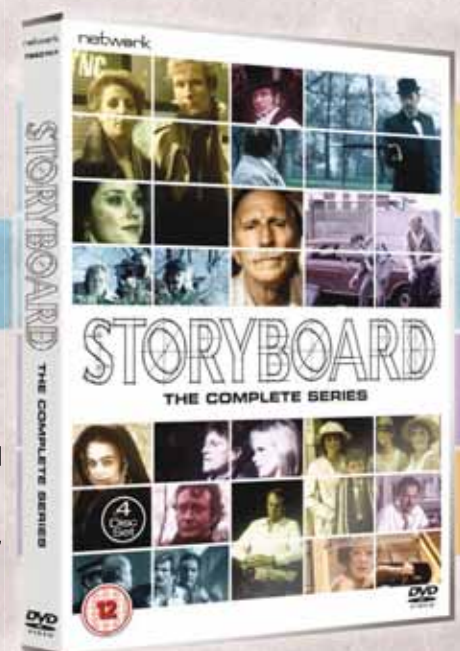
- 12 further plays ITV's flagship drama anthology from 1958-66 that have not been seen since.
- Including dramas from the pens of **Alun Owen**, **Ted Willis**, **Len Deighton** and **Jack Rosenthal**.
- Directors include **Ted Kotcheff**, **Philip Saville** and **Peter Hammond**.
- Stars include **Susannah York**, **Ian Holm**, **Donald Pleasence**, and **Terry-Thomas**.

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- The 1980s' version of ARMCHAIR THEATRE.
- Each drama served as a pilot for a possible future series.
- Notable successes included WOODENTOP (THE BILL) and A QUESTION OF COMMITMENT (MR PALFREY OF WESTMINSTER).

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LYN GOLEBY

The Picturehouse co-founder discusses the arthouse chain's future following its multi-million pound deal with Cineworld

By Geoffrey Macnab

When UK exhibition major Cineworld bought leading arthouse cinema chain Picturehouse late last year for a reported £47.3 million, reports in the press suggested that Picturehouse's co-founder and managing-director Lyn Goleby would become a multi-millionaire. Goleby dismisses this suggestion. "Reports of my multi-millionairehood are much exaggerated," she says.

Understandably, there was some disquiet among Picturehouse's regular customers at the news that the chain had been taken over by the big, bad exhibition major. Would this mean a change in programming – a move away from specialist fare towards a diet of popcorn and blockbusters?

The launch of Picturehouse dates back to 1989 when Goleby and Tony Jones took control of the Phoenix cinema in Oxford. Back then she had no idea that she would one day be selling her cinemas to a company like Cineworld. "But as you go through investment cycles you always have to present what your exits might be as well," Goleby says, talking about the need constantly to move Picturehouse forward. Going public was one obvious strategy. "The Cineworld deal has been a fantastic way to essentially go public."

Cineworld, the multi-screen chain with 80 cinemas (including – as its website proclaims – "four out of the ten highest-grossing cinemas in the UK and Ireland") doesn't seem a natural partner for the doughty independent Picturehouse. After all, Picturehouse – currently with 21 sites, just over 50 screens and a commitment to independent programming – is a fraction of Cineworld's size. "The company cultures have been very different. The way we approach audiences and spaces have been very different," Goleby acknowledges. "Where we find an absolutely seamless joining point is on operations. Fundamentally, they have built a tremendously efficient cinema machine and we have been building community cinemas across that time."

The idea is that the two new partners will complement each other. Goleby insists Picturehouse will retain its autonomy and that its programming will remain independent. "The only thing that has changed is the pattern of board meetings that we used to have with our venture-capital backers [Arts Alliance]," she says. "Everything we do and believe in – it really is all the same."

Is Goleby in 'golden handcuffs'? She parries the question, insisting that she has no desire to leave Picturehouse anyway and that she intends to carry on building cinemas. She mentions a couple of new Picturehouse sites she hopes to open in London, but refuses to go into detail about any others. "I am always a bit neurotic about sites," she



Going public: Lyn Goleby

says. "Until you've actually put a shovel into the ground, so much can go wrong."

The talk among some specialist exhibitors and distributors is of VOD – that is, curated films on demand on your tablet or your smart TV at the same time as they're available in cinemas. Picturehouse already has a partnership with online film provider Mubi, but Goleby is wary about the speed with which Picturehouse should embrace VOD. "I see [the partnership with Mubi] as a suitable gateway for us for the time being," she says, while conceding that she's not "wholly convinced" by some of the technology. "I am very happy to move along that path fairly slowly. I haven't felt the need to be a groundbreaker."

Only when there is a guarantee that consumers will get a fast, seamless and reliable experience of downloading a film every time is Picturehouse likely fully to embrace VOD. Besides, it's a matter of principle that Picturehouse is a cinema business based around buildings that have a place in their communities. "Obviously, access to film through the online portals is fantastic, but for me – and for what we've built at Picturehouse – it has all been about the physical experience of cinema."

Goleby came into the exhibition business in a circuitous way. She is Australian but grew up in Suffolk. After her Cambridge university degree, she qualified as a solicitor with the entertainment firm Denton Hall & Burgin. She

spent some time at Goldcrest in its turbulent heyday under Jake Eberts – "through the golden years and through the decline," she recalls of the years of *The Mission*, *Revolution* et al. "What a learning curve that experience was!" Ask her what went wrong and she suggests that the various departments at Goldcrest weren't "well aligned. In the end, that's what breaks things."

Post-Goldcrest, Goleby worked at public-funding agency British Screen under Simon Relph, before going on to work as a producer herself. "Nothing that made anybody any money!" she says of credits that included period drama *The Bridge* (1992) starring Saskia Reeves and *Diplomatic Immunity* (1991).

It was in this period she met Tony Jones, a veteran cinema programmer looking for money to take over the Phoenix in Oxford. "I thought I could probably get the money together that he was looking for," Goleby recalls. She had friends who were architects and could see a way to make the collaboration work. In the early days, her involvement was very "hands on" – she talks about sewing on the masking around the edge of the screen at the Phoenix. "We were very poor for several years," she admits. The diet of films the Phoenix showed was "completely arthouse".

Gradually, the chain began to expand. When the Duke of York's in Brighton went bust, Goleby and Jones bought the cinema from the receivers. At the same time they were building the site in Clapham that would become the Clapham Picturehouse. The idea was to create a chain of cinemas based in cities and serving their communities – partly in reaction to the out-of-town cinemas then being built up. Goleby's passion was for the buildings and the admin; Jones looked after the film side.

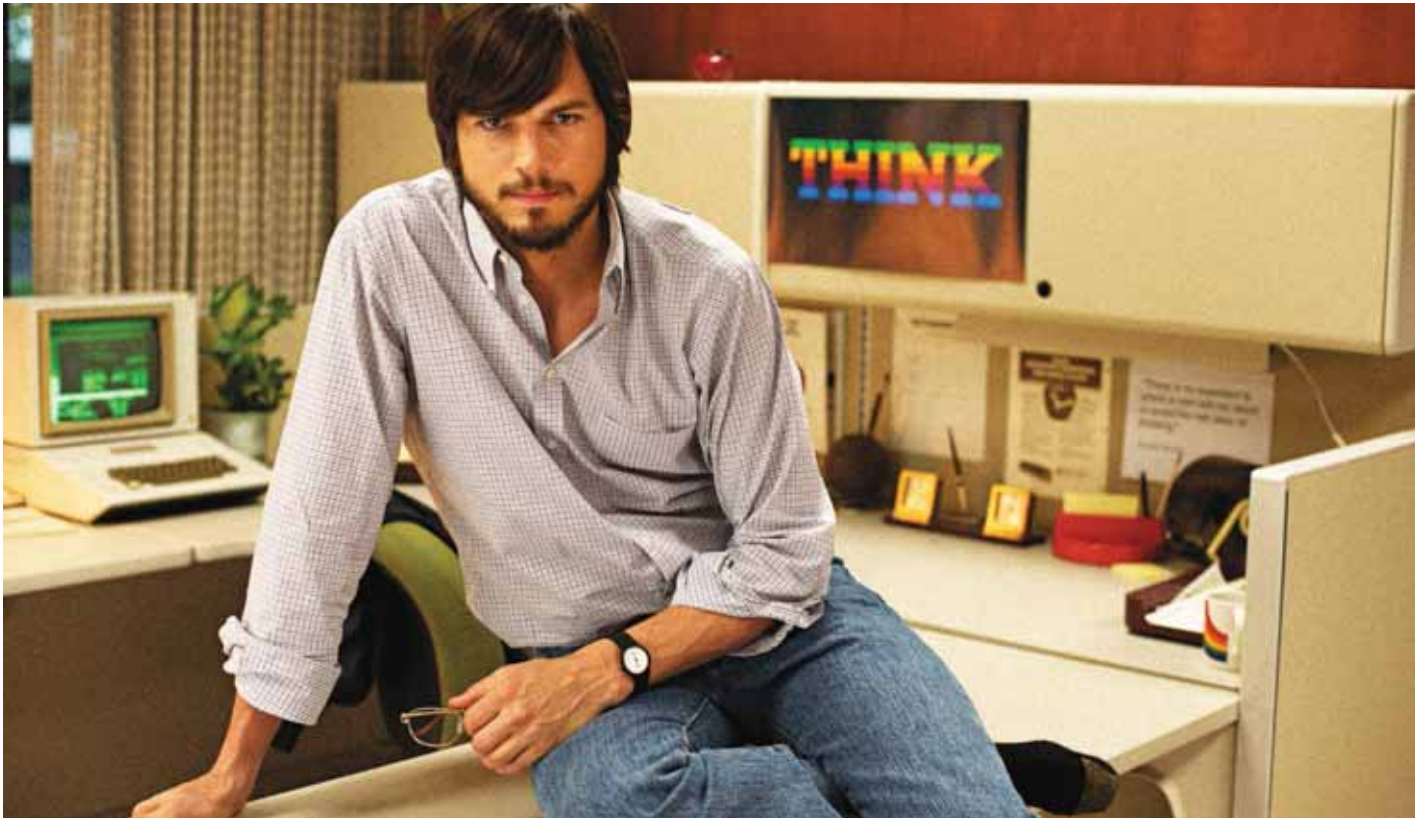
Just under a decade ago, City Screen (the official trading name of the company that runs Picturehouse cinemas) was heavily involved in the rolling out of the UK Film Council's Digital Screen Network (managed by Arts Alliance), a hugely ambitious scheme to equip hundreds of UK cinemas with digital projection technology and thereby to increase audience choice. In hindsight, Goleby acknowledges that this pioneering scheme had its drawbacks – not least the reliance on the virtual print fee (VPF), a charge levied by exhibitors on distributors to fund the conversion of cinemas so that films could be projected digitally; this is something distributors have long resented. Now that it has its own distribution arm, Picturehouse Entertainment (launched in 2010), Goleby's company has direct experience of paying the VPF.

As an exhibitor/distributor with a major company behind it, Picturehouse is now in a stronger position than many of its cash-strapped rivals in the still-crowded UK distribution sector. By moving into distribution itself, the company has given itself greater flexibility over how it programmes films such as *The Imposter* or *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*. At the same time, Goleby insists that Picturehouse has "a very balanced relationship" with other distributors who will be looking to its cinemas for screen time. "We all need to work together" is still the mantra. ☺

Goleby insists Picturehouse will retain its autonomy and that its programming will remain independent

SUNDANCE

WE HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY



Macintosh man: Ashton Kutcher as Apple guru Steve Jobs in 'JOBS'

The mainstream media may have focused on the sex, but it was technology that really drove this year's Sundance

By Eric Kohn

Before a single movie had screened to the public at this year's Sundance Film Festival, many of those scrutinising the programme had already teased out a broadly defined trend: sex. In countless movies, characters were having it under all kinds of conditions, most notably across generations. The covert romance between a buff high-school student and his meek instructor in *A Teacher* bore some resemblance to the uncertainly received *Two Mothers*, in which a pair of women slept with each other's sons, while *Don Jon's Addiction* found a porn-addicted Joseph Gordon-Levitt shacking up with a widowed Julianne Moore. James Franco discussed the lingering conservatism that sustains homophobia in US culture with a genre-defying recreation of excised scenes from *Cruising* in the concise *Interior. Leather Bar*. Franco also produced the midnight documentary *Kink*, about an S&M porn site, which could have made an apt double bill with the rambling biopic *Lovelace*.

But on the whole, the fixation with titillating subject matter at Sundance amounted to little

more than a red herring. A festival that first made waves with *sex, lies and videotape* almost a quarter of a century ago has provided plenty of glimpses of sexual identity over the years. The sex at Sundance in 2013 pointed neither to a new wave of savvy approaches to the subject nor an uptick in progressive cinema. Instead, the festival's truly contemporary ingredients, found in many of its strongest entries, involved the impact of technology both on the aesthetics of cinema and its capacity for deconstructing human experience.

While rumours of rampant cellphone use during Sundance screenings unfortunately rang true, this time around smartphones played key roles in many of the movies. In *Before Midnight*, Richard Linklater's masterful third entry in the romantic trilogy he launched 20 years ago, absorbing existential conversations are interrupted by characters glancing at their iPhones. Another sequel, the microbudget horror entry *S-VHS*, utilises a number of modern recording devices to execute its anthology of found-footage plots. The Grand Jury Prize-winning *Fruitvale* chronicles the story of a young man shot by a police officer in the Bay Area on New Year's Day 2009, an event rendered notorious by the recording of the incident by several camcorder-wielding pedestrians. Watching these movies in succession demonstrated the extent to which digital advancements permeate movies

today – as well as the society they depict.

Several festival entries used technical gimmicks in profound ways that reignited conversations about film form – a welcome relief from the tired discourse on the practical innovations of new filmmaking tools that ignores the creativity behind their application. Such waning interest was borne out in the bland, uninspiring Steve Jobs biopic *JOBS*, a thin portrait as slovenly executed as its spellcheck-confounding title. Ashton Kutcher's moody demeanour enlivens the mythology of the late Apple founder's cutthroat business tactics and relentless drive at the expense of providing a modicum of detail about his actual intellect. Perhaps that's the point, but if so, it devalues a celebratory introductory scene in which a middle-aged Jobs sings the praises of the iPod for melding artistry with practical invention; the driving force behind Apple's marketing coup, Jobs made consumers feel complicit in an artistic process by buying the company's products. That idea is lost in the messiness of Joshua Michael Stern's direction, while Matt Whiteley's on-the-nose screenplay constantly fails to reveal why any of this matters.

Fortunately, the historical takeaway excluded from *JOBS* came together neatly with Andrew Bujalski's *Computer Chess*, the Austin-based filmmaker's first movie since 2009's *Beeswax*. Set roughly in the era of computer development in which Apple was on the

rise, the intentionally lo-fi black-and-white production takes place at a lovingly depicted gathering of college geeks in the early 1980s. Under the guidance of a hilariously awkward professor (realised with deadpan brilliance by film critic Gerald Peary), students pit their clunky processors against each other in a series of chess games while wondering aloud about the ramifications of creating their increasingly intelligent machines. Bujalski infuses each scene with dry irony by shooting the whole movie on analogue video so that the supposedly forward-thinking event is constantly overshadowed by its antiquated nature.

As a series of misadventures unfold at the convention over the course of a chaotic weekend, *Computer Chess* is less about the obsolete devices than the people who make them. Whether struggling to make eye contact with the opposite sex or imagining amusingly prescient futuristic scenarios like the potential for computers to enhance dating life, the protagonists in *Computer Chess* anticipate the disconnect from reality set to influence worldwide communication two decades hence. Unlike Bujalski's earlier features, in which constant talk reveals the hidden subtext of behaviour, the filmmaker's witty script for *Computer Chess* takes on greater symbolic value. It's his headiest movie to date and – no small feat – his funniest.

Computer Chess also somewhat belatedly puts an end to the dubious categorisation of American indies known as mumblecore. Once considered the leading contributor to this ramshackle genre, Bujalski here shows a stylistic evolution that finally pulls him away from the clichés of shaky cameras and bad improvisation skills associated with the brand. True, the characters in *Computer Chess* mumble aplenty, but not without purpose.

Another filmmaker bucking expectations after years of dormancy was Shane Carruth. The one-man-band filmmaker-actor-producer-composer-cinematographer-visionary first confounded audiences with his profoundly dense head-scratcher *Primer*, a highly realistic movie about time travel that won Sundance's Grand Jury Prize in 2004. *Primer* established high expectations for Carruth: brainy science fiction grounded in realism. Yet his long-awaited sophomore feature *Upstream Color* takes the opposite tack.

Carruth himself stars opposite Amy Seimetz in a continually baffling narrative more or less about a woman whose consciousness is implanted in a pig. While she forms an uneasy romance with Carruth's character, growing suspicious of forces controlling their every movement, the movie shifts from body horror to swooning existentialism. Defined by its stirring imagery and an aggressively murky atmosphere, *Upstream Color* doesn't merely invite interpretation; it demands multiple understandings, none of which lays bare the whole equation.

At the same time, the movie's truly rewarding aspect stems from its ability to transcend firm meaning and draw the viewer along through a rhythmically assembled series of compelling



'Upstream Color'

moments that sustain the story's emotional validity. *Upstream Color* defies any attempt to casually absorb its plot: the antithesis to the soul-searching romantic chatter that defines *Before Midnight* and its predecessors, Carruth's approach fuses interpersonal longing and confusion in purely abstract terms. This is as much a technical feat as an artistic one, but in Carruth's case, they're one and the same. Appropriately, the movie only won an award for its sound design, also credited to the director – in this case, an apt summation of a movie that fuses highbrow formalism with ideological prowess.

That same description applied to several movies at the festival. Randy Moore's *Escape from Tomorrow* follows a deadbeat blue-collar dad and his whiny family around Disney World in a black-and-white vacation-from-hell scenario that finds the bleary-eyed man slowly losing his mind to the snazzy corporate iconography surrounding him. Secretly shot with small cameras on location in the theme park, without an iota of permission, *Escape from Tomorrow* combines camp and claustrophobia to deliver a sly critique of the institution in which it takes place. More than that, its raw power emerges from the potential illegality of the production: 21st-

'Before Midnight' is Richard Linklater's masterful third entry in the romantic trilogy he launched 20 years ago



Third act: Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy in 'Before Midnight'

century outlaw filmmaking at its finest.

While *Escape from Tomorrow* is a surrealistic act of aggression, *The Square* captures a literal one. Documentarian Jehane Noujaim (*Control Room*) spent two years shooting the Egyptian revolution in Tahrir Square, focusing on a handful of driven men and women still engaged in the cause following the downfall of President Mubarak. Frustrated to find the new government dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood, the activists express their cries for democracy against increasingly daunting odds that Noujaim captures at every turn. Her camera witnesses violent protests, screaming matches between opposing sides and media tirades, illustrating a revolution in progress that still – contrary to Western perceptions – has a long way to go.

Shot with intimate footage capturing the uprising up close, *The Square* wasn't the only non-fiction achievement testifying to the versatility of digital cameras. *The Summit* recounts the harrowing experience of several thrill-seeking climbers on a perilous attempt to reach the summit of K2 in 2008, when 11 out of the 18 on the expedition lost their lives. The events are captured via a collection of found footage and re-enactments, but it's often hard to tell which is which, a testament to the willingness of modern filmmakers to blur the lines.

Similarly, the experimental *Charlie Victor Romeo* exclusively draws from black-box recordings of plane crashes in a series of ominous re-enactments that reimagine the behaviour of the cockpit crew while staying true to the audio. Through the succession of crashes, enacted with unique suspense as the fate of each passenger remains unclear until the end, *Charlie Victor Romeo* underscores the tantalising possibility in the digital age that every moment of life – and death – may end up scrutinised by strangers. The project, based on a 1999 play of the same name, manifests the perverse desires permitted by audiovisual documentation. That makes it the epitome of the dominant motif of this year's Sundance, where technological artistry circulated with greater resonance than ever. **S**

COMPETITIONS

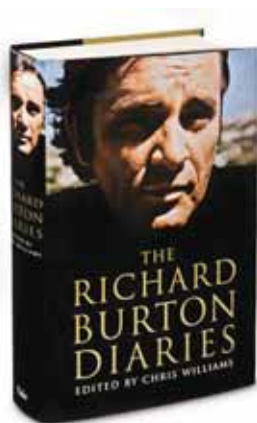
THE RICHARD BURTON DIARIES: FIVE COPIES TO BE WON

In this fascinating collection from Yale University Press, the extensive personal diaries of Richard Burton are published for the first time in their entirety. The diaries encompass many years – from 1939, when he was still a teenager, to 1983, the year before his death. From these hand-written pages emerges an articulate, multi-dimensional man. Burton's diaries offer a fresh perspective on his own life and career, and on the glamorous decades of the mid-20th century.

To be in with a chance of winning, simply answer the following question:

Q. Which one of these films starred Richard Burton minus Elizabeth Taylor?

- a. Under Milk Wood
- b. The Comedians
- c. Bluebeard



MY BROTHER THE DEVIL: FIVE COPIES EACH ON DVD OR BLU-RAY TO BE WON

Winner of the Best British Newcomer award at the 2012 BFI London Film Festival, Sally El Hosaini won critical praise for her debut feature *My Brother the Devil*. Verve Pictures now present the film on DVD and Blu-ray. It follows the story of two British-Egyptian brothers growing up in inner London. Mo idolises his elder brother Rashid, a member of a local gang, but a fateful turn of events forces them both to confront their inner demons. We have five copies each on DVD and Blu-ray.

To be in with a chance of winning, simply answer the following question and state your edition preference on your entry:

Q. In the film, where do Mo and Rashid live?

- a. Hackney
- b. Ladbroke Grove
- c. Peckham



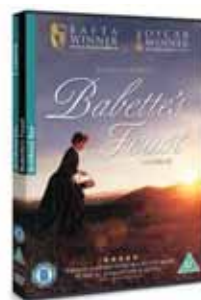
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Courtesy of Artificial Eye we've amassed a number of their latest DVD releases to give away to two lucky readers. Titles include Sally Potter's *Ginger & Rosa*, Michael Haneke's *Amour* and Peter Strickland's *Berberian Sound Studio*. Also in the prize is a collection of Claire Denis films including *White Material* and *Beau Travail*, and a Dardenne brothers collection featuring *The Kid with a Bike*, *The Silence of Lorna* and *The Son*.

To be in with a chance of winning this fantastic prize, simply answer the following question:

Q. In 'Amour' what professions were Georges and Anne working as prior to retirement?

- a. Art teachers
- b. Music teachers
- c. Language teachers



HOW TO ENTER

Email your answer, name and address, putting either 'Artificial Eye DVDs', 'My Brother the Devil competition' or 'Richard Burton Diaries competition' in the subject heading, to s&scompetition@bfi.org.uk. Or send a postcard with your answer to either 'Artificial Eye prize', 'My Brother the Devil competition', or 'Richard Burton Diaries competition' at Sight & Sound, BFI, 21 Stephen Street, London W1T 1LN.

The deadline for all competitions is Tuesday 19 March 2013.

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- * Prizes cannot be exchanged for cash.
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THE FUTURE IS NO

With his new film 'No', Pablo Larraín returns to Chile under Pinochet's rule for the third time, but this portrait of an advertising campaigner who sells the rejection of Pinochet the same way he sells cola is more about the dynamics of community action than a hymn to a loner

By Jonathan Romney

The new film by Chilean director Pablo Larraín begins with a resounding piece of purposeful rhetoric. Addressing a roomful of people, a young man promises to show them something “in line with the current social context”, with citizens’ demand for “truth”: “Today,” he says, “Chile thinks in its future.” What he then presents is an advert for a soft drink, Free Cola.

The hyperventilating tackiness of the cola ad that we see – a genuine commercial of the 1980s – is all the more bitter in that its images of exuberance and liberty (rock bands, jubilant teens, even a gurning white-faced mime) are not what we normally associate with Chile under the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet. The ironies of Larraín’s film become all the more evident when, later, the same executive, René Saavedra (played by Gael García Bernal), presents another ad, this time for a 1988 campaign designed to persuade the Chilean people to vote against the Pinochet regime. Many images in this campaign are the same – youth, sunshine, hope. Saavedra presents this ad too in exactly the terms in which he touts Free Cola: the future, truth, a new social context.

No is Pablo Larraín’s third film in a row to address the Pinochet era, but it’s also something of a departure. His previous two films *Tony Manero* (2008) and *Post Mortem* (2010), respectively co-written and written by the director, are about disturbed, isolated individuals (both played by the remarkable Alfredo Castro) who, one way or another, exemplify the ills of the Pinochet years. *No* veers away from these films’ sombre, grotesque absurdism for a more conventional mode of realistic docudrama, befitting its public narrative; Larraín was invited to direct *No*, from a script by Pedro Peirano, after a stage play

by Antonio Skármeta. This time, Larraín recounts a political event through the perspective of public institutions – television and the advertising industry. *No* is docudrama of a sort that Hollywood might recognise: it essentially belongs to the same ‘how-it-happened’/‘how-they-pulled-it-off’ genre as, say, Michael Mann’s tobacco industry story *The Insider*, sports-business drama *Moneyball* or recent war stories *Argo* and *Zero Dark Thirty*.

No recounts the part played by the Chilean advertising industry in 1988 in mobilising public feeling towards a new national mood, one that staked its bet on a new future liberated from the dictatorship that had brutally seized power in 1973. Despite the government’s stranglehold on the state, its need for legitimate status in the eyes of the international community meant that Pinochet needed at least to make it look as if the Chilean people had a free voice. The national constitution made provision for a national referendum, to be held in 1988, to determine whether or not Pinochet’s government should continue in place for another eight years. As Larraín explains, few believed that the 1988 referendum would change anything: “There had been one in 1980, and it’s well known that it was fixed by the authorities – you had army members voting five times each, and even dead people voted that day.”

In 1988, the Pinochet government felt that it could hold a plebiscite with impunity: the economic stability it had achieved (at the cost, *No* points out, of 40 per cent of Chileans living below the poverty line) meant that his regime was widely supported. The government believed that no one would heed the anti-Pinochet ‘No’ slots to be televised over 27 nights, programmed

NEGATIVE DIALECTIC
René Saavedra (Gael García Bernal) must convince his radical wife, as well as his clients, that his cheesy ad campaign will work







against the opposing 'Yes' campaign. In Larraín's film, the fictional Saavedra cautiously agrees to work for the 'No' campaign, devising 15-minute late-night slots to muster enthusiasm for a new youthful, positive spirit in Chile. The adverts we see him working on are highly paradoxical: they say 'Yes' to life, sometimes with grinding overstatement, yet they carry the punchline 'No', the polling option they urge their public to adopt.

Similarly, the pro-Pinochet 'Yes' slots – devised with the collaboration of Saavedra's boss and equivocal benefactor Luis Guzmán (Alfredo Castro) – are sometimes straightforwardly upbeat, promoting a hagiographic image of Pinochet as father of the nation. But they too often take a negative stance, decrying the opposition as destructive to Chilean well-being. One amazing (and absolutely genuine) ad in this vein shows the 'No' movement as a bulldozer crushing baby buggies in its path (in one scene of *No*, a pro-Pinochet committee admits this spot to be a miscalculation of incomparable crassness).

Central to *No*, and to its documentary thrust, is Larraín's use of the archaic U-matic video format – giving ads and dramatic material alike the same artfully coarse visual feel of the period – and his use of original material from the 'No' and 'Yes' campaigns alike. Larraín didn't remake the ads, instead running the well-known originals, but he does reconstruct their shooting, sometimes to tart comic effect. One ad, exemplifying the 'No' motto "Happiness is Coming", shows a family picnicking in the country. But there's dissent on set, one participant objecting that the bread used is at odds with national reality: "No one in Chile eats baguettes."

Along with the ads, Larraín gives us the debates that accompany them. Early on, he shows a spot depicting government brutality under Pinochet, with sobering statistics of the tortured, killed and 'disappeared' of the previous 15 years. But this is not what the public wants, Saavedra objects: instead, he wants to sell the idea of happiness, as he would in a cola ad. The gleaming montages we see (leotarded dancers, smiling riders on horseback, cheery taxi drivers) were in reality immensely successful spots for the 'No' campaign. Not that some of the pro-Pinochet spots are that different in tone. As *No* shows, the ever-marketable image of populist happiness belongs neither to Left nor Right; indeed, there's a striking similarity between the 'No' ads and the beaming, singing crowds of a notorious Italian TV campaign of 2007 to

boost Silvio Berlusconi as a beloved popular leader.

But there are more trenchant images on display in *No*. Amid all the kitsch and clumsiness, one 'No' ad holds up as a vintage piece of challenging agitprop: footage of an anti-government demonstrator beaten by a police officer, as a voiceover applies the same terms to both figures: "This man wants peace – *this* man wants peace... This man is a Chilean – *this* man is a Chilean..."

HOPES AND ILLUSIONS

If the inevitable comparisons with *Mad Men* have any validity, it will be because *No*'s depiction of the hopes and illusions of a comparatively recent past is suffused with a troubling ironic sensibility. What's especially provocative about *No* is that Larraín and screenwriter Peirano find contradictions within what might seem an unproblematic narrative of democratic triumph – raising critical questions about the fate of Chile, and about propaganda and the commercialisation of politics. Saavedra is notable for his bad faith: at one point, he's seen shooting an ad for microwave ovens, although he warns an actress that they're dangerous. Politically a blank slate, he's a creature of the media who becomes involved in the 'No' campaign through the force of circumstance. It's his ex-wife Veronica (Antonia Zegers) who truly stands on the Left; she's first seen being roughed up by police while Saavedra looks on uncomfortably.

Veronica accuses the 'No' campaign of ideological vacancy; she sees the supposedly legitimate referendum as transparent fraud, and tells her husband that to play along with it is to grant legitimacy to Pinochet's criminal government. She's not the only one to criticise the 'No' approach. At one point, a left-wing politician asks why the ads don't address the violence of the regime; he sees them as "a campaign of silence", of happy denial.

Saavedra and his colleagues appear to inhabit a comfortable, protected world, cosy in the warmth of Pinochet's economy; at one point, they discuss plans over a beachside barbecue. Later, however, Larraín emphasises the courage needed to pursue the 'No' campaign: police hover menacingly in cars outside Saavedra's house (although it's not him but his middle-aged housekeeper who dares go outside to confront them).

The story ends on a historical note of affirmation: despite the initial count declaring in favour of 'Yes', Chile voted 'No' (55.99 per cent of the vote) and Pinochet's days were numbered. But in a discreetly sour

DAYDREAM BELIEVER

By making people imagine their perfect future, René, (right, and carrying his son on his shoulders, left) helps them to understand it can't happen if Pinochet remains

GAEL GARCIA BERNAL

For the Mexican star of 'No', the blending of documentary and fiction represents an abiding preoccupation

Interview by Mar Diestro-Dópido

Mar Diestro-Dópido: What was it that attracted you to working with Pablo Larraín on 'No'?

Gael García Bernal: Besides a mutual admiration for each other's work, friendship was the prelude to everything else. When we first met there was no script, just an idea, an outline. I thought the story was incredibly interesting; it's intriguing to learn how Pinochet was overthrown, and very few people in the world know this. Everyone knows how he came to power, but not how he exited, and I for one didn't have a clue about the important role advertising played in his fall. I thought it was a very interesting angle that siblings Pablo Larraín and [producer] Juan de Dios [Larraín] had chosen. Somehow, this was the moment when the new Chile was established, the new democratic society, and it's shown through the eyes of an advertising executive – a little cold, cynical, and with a certain distance.

MDD: Is the character you play based on anyone in particular?

GGB: The René [Saavedra] character is an amalgam of two Chilean figures: Eugenio García and José Manuel Salcedo, the main advertising executives who put together the campaign team. My involvement added an element, which was the possibility of making René an exile. This accentuates an important aspect brought about by Pinochet's coup – that fractured, painful world of the exiles, still an open wound in Chilean society, but also everything that the exiles brought back with them. Hence René acquires an interesting dimension, a certain foreignness that gave me the opportunity to make him more existentialist somehow.

MDD: Has the experience of acting changed since you became a director [with 'Déficit', 2007]?

GGB: Some of my director friends told me: "You'll see, now it's going to be complicated. Your approach to cinema is going to be very different after having been a director yourself." And it's true. A film is like launching yourself in the air and seeing where you land – an act of faith. And it just so happens that Pablo Larraín is the kind of person you can trust to inspire that act of faith. So one always hopes for and anticipates that fraternal, cathartic moment – a kind of creative frenzy that



Exile on main street: Gael García Bernal

makes you think all of this is actually worth it. If it weren't like that, I'd feel that there is another job I could be doing.

MDD: Can you talk a little about the humour in the film?

GGB: There's a latent humour that is very English, in fact quite Monty Python-esque. A lot of the team on *No* lived through the 80s, and we were very much recalling the kind of worldview that the Western world used to have at the time, which seems irremediably amusing in retrospect. Similarly, the day-to-day workings of an absolutist regime can seem very ridiculous. What Pinochet used to say sounds ridiculous now because of its grotesque nature – as with hindsight do all those promises made by the democratic government, that from now on Chile was going to be equal, and so on.

Advertising appropriated those empty promises. In the 80s, when that cowboy was having a cigarette at sunset, it was incredibly aspirational: we all wanted to smoke, to be that cowboy. Now we find that funny, but in the film we had to locate the story in the 80s but not make fun of it; after all, it's the story of how advertising overthrew Pinochet with his own weapons, with the same language of marketing and the consumer society. From the beginning, Pinochet himself imposed all that, and it's

precisely what ended up devouring him. There is an element of classic tragedy in this.

MDD: 'No' is shot on U-matic video so that there's little or no difference between the new footage and the archival inserts actually filmed in the 1980s. Does this blurring of reality and fiction link in any way to the itinerant film festival you set up, *El Ambulante*, which focuses on documentary?

GGB: That's precisely what it's all about! The point of the festival has always been, obviously, to show documentaries. But before anything else, a good documentary is a good film, and a good fiction is a good film. So there's a meeting-point where one can no longer offer a definition of what is a documentary and what is fiction, because there are always shared elements. The achievement of *No* is to maintain that very fine line between documentary and fiction throughout.

Many of the actors are people – executives, sociologists, politicians – who took part in the 'No' campaign, and in the film they are often playing people who were their enemies. The documentary elements in *No* are therefore like a film within the film. This not only signals how much *No* is about reconciliation and empathy, but also shows how cinema – or any other artistic expression – is capable of that internal dialogue. ☺



coda, Larraín asks how much really changed in the Chilean social system. In the closing scene, the same formulae – truth, the future, the new social context – are used by Saavedra in another presentation to clients, this time for the launch of a glitzy TV telenovela. The regime may have changed, but for the industry of social reassurance, Larraín suggests, it's still business as usual.

Jonathan Romney: After the stylised, oblique treatment of the Pinochet years in 'Tony Manero' and 'Post Mortem', what was it like to address the period more directly and realistically?

Pablo Larraín: It was scary to deal with something so sensitive. This is one of the most important moments in the history of my country, and most of the people involved, on both sides, are still alive. I was 12 at the time, but I remember when the campaign was aired every day, the country would stop – it was like when Chile was in the World Cup, there were no cars in the streets, everybody was watching. Pinochet thought it wasn't going to be that important. We show ministers saying, "Who cares, we control everything." It was on at 11 at night, not seven or eight – but everybody watched it, and it changed everything.

JR: The film has an extraordinary look: you've shot in the U-matic format to create a very rough look echoing a 1980s TV style.

PL: I like that it looks like it was shot by a student. I wanted the TV ads and the main narrative to have the same look – if you can see the difference, it destroys the illusion. We wanted people not to know what they were looking at. We used U-matic, an 80s format – a very ugly square with very low resolution. We hired a company in Hollywood who specialise in this sort of thing. They bought 20 cameras, dismantled them and assembled four for us. We recorded digitally, but the result still has less resolution than an iPhone video. This camera has the period in its soul.

JR: Advertising people in cinema are usually seen as villains. Here you suggest that the ad industry can be noble – up to a point.

PL: This movie shows how someone like Pinochet, who imposed a very strong capitalist system, can create the people who pushed him out. Saavedra grew out of Pinochet's system. In Spanish we say "Cria cuervos" ("Raise ravens and they'll peck out your eyes") – you create the

thing that kills you. Pinochet wasn't defeated through a political revolution, but by a neoliberalist way of looking at life: marketing. We're talking about people who sell spaghetti, we're not talking about Che Guevara.

For me, the movie's not just about what happened before the referendum, it's about what happened after. Since 1988, we've been living in a shopping centre. *No* is not just about defeating Pinochet, it's about where Chile is going – and what's going on now is terrible.

JR: In his recent documentary 'Nostalgia for the Light', Patricio Guzmán says that there's still a spirit of denial in Chile: a resistance to talking about the Pinochet years. What has been the reaction to 'No' there?

PL: Today freedom of speech is not a problem in my country. But we have a problem with fiction. When my film came out in Chile, other people came forward and said, "Wait, this film doesn't show what we did..." – and then others said, "Wait, we had a very strong street movement." They feel the movie is saying that we defeated Pinochet just because of these ads. The people in my country not only voted, they created a movement in the streets. But the campaign was a catalyst, it actually made people believe it was possible, and that was the first step. What we're doing is just showing a little piece of this iceberg.

And it was hard for some people to see the metaphor. We focus on the ad executives because we think that when we used advertising to defeat Pinochet, we sealed a pact with his system, with his logic. 'No' won, but we negotiated with Pinochet – so 'Yes' also won a little bit that day.

JR: You've inevitably taken liberties with the facts. (Saavedra is a fictional character; actual executives who worked on the 'No' campaign were consultants on the film, and appear in it – playing executives on the 'Yes' side.)

PL: The campaign was made by a lot of people. We had a huge amount of information: we had testimonies, we had hundreds of thousands of video hours, it was impossible to handle. Pedro [Peirano, the screenwriter] was so smart, he could actually compress it. I'm not Robert Altman – I wouldn't know how to handle 30 characters.

JR: So this could have been a whole TV series.

PL: [smiling] Well... we're thinking about it.

i 'No' is released in the UK on 8 February, and is reviewed on page 101

'No' is not just about defeating Pinochet, it's about where Chile is going – and what's going on now is terrible

TWIST OF FATE
Director Pablo Larraín (above) uses 'No' to ask critical questions about the fate of Chile, propaganda and the commercialisation of politics

MAD MEN IN THE MOVIES

When the protagonist of a film works in advertising, the chances are he won't be represented as a pillar of integrity, and moral compromise will be the order of the day

By Kim Newman

In Hitchcock's *North by Northwest* (1959), the ad exec played by Cary Grant presents the heroine with a monogrammed matchbook that announces his name as Roger O. Thornhill. When asked what the middle initial stands for, he responds "nothing". This pretty much sums up Hollywood's vision of the advertising industry: a smiling embodiment of 'ROT', standing for nothing. The subtext of Thornhill's ordeal when mistaken for a spy and chased across America by enemy agents and the authorities alike is that he needs to be shaken out of his world of martinis, divorces and glad-handing emptiness, and fill in that hole in his soul (and his name) with love, patriotism and adventure.

As early as *The Hucksters* (1947), with Clark Gable as an adman struggling to maintain his integrity in the cutthroat world of Madison Avenue, the movies looked down on advertising – perhaps partly because the studios were in the ad-pub business themselves, and via their radio (and, later, television) arms had to negotiate with sponsors, ad agencies, market reports and demographics in a way that reminded even titans like Louis B. Mayer and Harry Cohn who paid their enormous salaries. Simone Simon's werepanther in *Cat People* (1942) and Gene Tierney's potential murder victim in *Laura* (1944) are both commercial artists, reflecting a certain feminine if also slightly queer (in several meanings of the term) choice of profession. The likes of Gable and Grant (an adman also in 1948's *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House*) – modify this, but the major star machismo they bring to Madison Avenue – the foundation of a myth of sharp-suited studliness fostered by the TV show *Mad Men* – is undercut by the way the profession makes them ridiculous, even unmanly.

In fact, the movies are awash with casual digs at even their own in-house admen: the press agent in *A Star Is Born* (1935) is the most hateful denizen of the studio, responsible for breaking the stars he has made with a casual cruelty, whereas the studio head is a revered, fatherly figure.

By the mid-1950s – when post-war prosperity and the rise of commercial



Hucksters: 'Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?' is a glossy assault on the absurdity of adland aesthetics

television gave the adman an unprecedented power in America – the advertising industry was the subject of various ferocious satires, with the general assumption that its job was to sell anything at inflated prices and whip up bogus, hollow celebrity. Frank Tashlin's *The Girl Can't Help It* (1956) and *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?* (1957) are glossy, sparkly, widescreen assaults on the absurdity of the detergent-commercial aesthetic, but they take care to indict the suckers and the sponsors along with the flimflam merchants. This carried over into such tart exercises as the Doris Day/Rock Hudson romcom *Lover Come Back* (1961) and *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (1967), which are about merchandising products that don't really exist – a theme taken to its ultimate extreme in the first version of *The Lorax* (1972), from a book by ex-adman Dr



A hard sell: 'Madison Avenue'

Seuss, in which the apocalypse is brought about by a slogan ("you need a thneed").

In Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly's *It's Always Fair Weather* (1955), merely revealing that Dan Dailey has gone into advertising after the war was enough to suggest his fall from grace, and to allow for the jokes about adspeak ("run it up the flagpole and see who salutes") and cocktails that proliferated in *MAD Magazine's* many satires on Madison Avenue well before the era was rediscovered and affectionately indicted by *Mad Men*. More soul-searching perspectives were offered in the likes of *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1956) and *Madison Avenue* (1962), which find Gregory Peck and Dana Andrews, respectively, burning out in the public-relations business; in the same period, films like *Advise and Consent* (1962) and *The Best Man* (1964) showed advertising methods seeping into politics, reducing democracy to hucksterism.

For the most part, this vision of the advertising profession has persisted, even in the decades when filmmakers from that world (Ridley Scott, Alan Parker et al) increasingly found themselves making features. Venom and scorn continued to be poured on ad execs in films as diverse as Robert Downey Sr's *Putney Swope* (1969), Bruce Robinson's *How to Get Ahead in Advertising* (1989) and Tony Bill's *Crazy People* (1990), while Robert Benton's *Kramer vs. Kramer* (1979) showed Dustin Hoffman so preoccupied with his new account that he blunders blindly into cinema's most famous divorce, unaware even of which grade his son is in at school. As in the case of Roger O. Thornhill, advertising in the movies is not so much a job as a mindset to be escaped, so that a new, more evolved human being can emerge.

After years of neglect by UK distributors, the Taviani brothers are back, well into their eighties, with their grittiest film yet, the Golden Bear-winning 'Caesar Must Die', a raw slab of Shakespeare filmed in a Roman prison

By Pasquale Iannone

HONOURABLE MEN

The Taviani brothers often tell the story of the epiphanic moment when they decided to become filmmakers. Vittorio (born 1929) and Paolo (born 1931) were still in their teens when they drifted into a half-empty screening of Rossellini's *Paisà* (1946) in their Tuscan hometown of San Miniato. Completely overwhelmed by the raw, clear-eyed power of Rossellini's images, they made the joint decision there and then to pursue a career in filmmaking. Shortly afterwards, the brothers joined forces with young communist (and former partisan) Valentino Orsini to direct a series of experimental plays: energetic fusions of commedia dell'arte, Brecht and (Rossellinian) neorealism. In one production, they explored the history of Livornese dock workers, inviting the dockers themselves to talk about their lives under fascism and their involvement with the resistance movement. While these experiences were undoubtedly valuable, it was clear that for Orsini and the Tavianis, the theatre was a stop-gap – a way of testing out ideas and techniques before making the leap to cinema.

Under the guidance of writer and theorist Cesare Zavattini, the trio shot their first documentary *San Miniato, July 1944* (1954) before making the decisive move south to Rome in the mid-1950s. There, as well as making a further nine documentaries, they gained experience as assistant directors and screenwriters before mounting their feature debut *A Man for Burning* (*Un uomo da bruciare*) in 1962. Their collaboration with Orsini having run its course by the mid-1960s, the Tavianis soon established themselves as important figures of post-neorealist Italian cinema. Their deeply personal, politically engaged works such as *The Subversives* (*I sovversivi*, 1967), *Under the Sign of Scorpio* (*Sotto il segno dello scorpione*, 1968), *Allonsanfàn* (1974) and the Palme d'Or-winning *Padre Padrone* (1977) grappled with neorealism while departing significantly from it. (Like other filmmakers of their



THEY'VE ALL GOT IT IN FOR ME
Caesar (Giovanni Arcuri, centre) in the convict production of 'Julius Caesar' filmed in 'Caesar Must Die'



generation, the brothers were left disillusioned by its slide into insipid naturalism after its post-war heyday.) “When Paolo and I are asked about post-war Italian cinema,” says Vittorio, now 83, the brother who takes on interview duties, “we always use the metaphor of the tree: the roots deep underground are Rossellini, Visconti and De Sica while the branches above are directors like us, Bertolucci, Scola, Ferreri and others. Although we all sprouted off in different directions, the roots remained.”

The brothers have gone back to their roots (both theatrical and filmic) for *Caesar Must Die* (*Cesare deve morire*). Their 17th picture sees real-life inmates stage a version of Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* within the walls of Rome’s Rebibbia prison. The film comes after 2007’s *The Lark Farm* (*La masseria delle allodole*), a historical epic chronicling the Armenian genocide of 1915. Despite boasting a high-profile international cast (Paz Vega, Angela Molina, Tchéky Karyo), the film was not released theatrically in the UK, a fate shared by most of the Tavianis’ output of the past two decades. “As a project, *The Lark Farm* was really close to our hearts and we’re glad that the Armenians themselves were pleased with it,” Vittorio recalls. “We even received a prize from their government for highlighting this tragic episode in their history.”

Looking back over the brothers’ body of work, it’s apparent that they’ve often followed up the exertions of an epic production with films on a much smaller scale (*Padre Padrone* after *Allonsanfan*, for instance), but Vittorio insists this is unintentional: “With *Caesar Must Die*, we didn’t set out to make a low-budget film – it just turned out that way. But I have to say that during filming, Paolo and I felt we were working with the same simplicity and spontaneity of our early features.”

The initial idea for the film came when the brothers were invited to a prison inmates’ production of Dante’s *The Divine Comedy*. “It affected us so deeply that we both agreed we had to make a film about it,” Vittorio explains. “Most of our projects happen that way: we’re either moved by something or we are confronted with a situation completely alien to us that we want to explore. When deciding on a piece for the inmates to perform, we thought that it had to be a play with an Italian setting – one which loomed large in the popular imagination. It also had to be a piece which the inmates could connect with.”

The brothers began reading Shakespeare at a young age and, while they have never attempted a full adaptation, the Bard has been a constant source of inspiration. In *A Man for Burning*, for instance, they depict Salvatore Carnevale – the union-leader protagonist played by Gian Maria Volonté – as a latter-day Coriolanus, while *Allonsanfan*’s Fulvio Imbriani (Marcello Mastroianni) is Hamlet-like in his tormented indecision. *Julius Caesar*’s themes of politics, power, betrayal and, of course, ruthless violence resonated deeply with *Caesar Must Die*’s cast of prisoners, many of whom were serving life sentences. “The inmates thought that if they could manage to represent, in an artistic context, the darkest part of their beings, they could come close not so much to liberation but to confession,” Vittorio explains. “Having taken the film around the world over the past few months, I think this is what audiences have reacted to most strongly.”

The prison performance of *The Divine Comedy* that so impressed the Tavianis had Dante’s original 14th-



century Tuscan translated into contemporary regional dialect, and the brothers agreed on a similar technique for their version of *Julius Caesar*. “To hear Dante acted out in Neapolitan was disconcerting at first, but there’s something particularly intimate when an actor performs in the language he is most comfortable with – there is more of an emotional connection with the material,” says Vittorio. “Once Paolo and I finished our own adaptation, we passed it on to the inmates who then began to translate it into their own dialects. The funny thing was that while the prisoners were working on their scripts, other inmates from the same region would peer over their shoulders and offer advice on the best way to say such and such a line.”

ANTI-NATURALISTIC

Caesar Must Die begins in colour with the intense climactic moments of the play. The Tavianis then move back six months to chronicle the auditions and rehearsals. This main segment of the film employs a rich monochrome palette with lighting that recalls, among other works, the interiors in Pedro Costa’s 1989 debut *O Sangue*. “We wanted to draw on the anti-naturalistic qualities of black and white,” says Vittorio. “Colour has become so commonplace now that when a filmmaker decides to shoot in black and white, it almost seems like an attack on the viewer. That being said, the central premise of our film is already somewhat ‘anti-naturalistic’, so we felt that the use of monochrome was particularly apt.”

The black and white is used to extraordinary effect in the audition sequence, when, to test their acting skills, each prisoner is asked to give the same series of personal details in two contrasting ways. While the lighting here is stylised, camera movement is straightforward. As the inmates perform, the Tavianis do not cut to reaction shots of the play’s director Fabio Cavalli and his collaborator as they look on, preferring to focus on the individual auditionees, whose expressions switch from trembling pain to seething anger. Once the parts have been distributed, a medium close-up of each actor follows, including a caption outlining the sentence he is serving and the crimes committed. The shots are accompanied by a wistful tune

STERNER STUFF
Vittorio, left, and Paolo Taviani, right, and their cast of prisoners, below, including Brutus (Salvatore Striano, far right)

on the harmonica played by one of the actors, 34-year-old lifer Vincenzo Gallo.

In terms of the film's deployment of music more generally, the Tavianis use two major themes written by composers Giuliano Taviani (Vittorio's son) and Carmelo Travia. "Giuliano and Carmelo started work on the music just as Paolo and I began shooting," says Vittorio. "Giuliano then came to visit us on location. At first, we could tell that he was intimidated by the prisoners – one in particular he said had the most terrifying stare. After spending a day with them, however, he felt more at ease. He decided shortly after that the main theme for the film – meant to reflect the solitude and isolation of the prisoners – would be played on the saxophone. When we first heard it, Paolo and I felt it was ideal: the melody had a real sense of melancholy about it, evoking a sense of loss." As counterpoint, the composers wrote a second, more full-bodied theme whose pulsating strings heighten the drama of some of the rehearsal scenes.

Other sequences, however, such as Caesar's murder, had no need for musical accompaniment. "When we shot Caesar's murder scene, there was a lot of tension on set, both among the prisoners and the crew," Vittorio recalls. "Once we had blocked the sequence, we asked our actors to stand still and concentrate. We asked them to gather their thoughts and think about what could lead to someone to take someone else's life. Then Paolo and I suddenly stopped and looked at each other: 'What are we saying? Who are we to tell these men about the realities of violence and murder?'"

Vittorio freely admits to wrestling with a troubling contradiction both during and after filming: "As the production went on, we developed a real fondness and affection for our actors. At the same time, it goes without saying that we abhorred the terrible crimes they had committed. It's a contradiction I don't think we'll ever really resolve."

Contradiction and ambiguity are of course at the heart of all of the Tavianis' best work and *Caesar Must Die* is no exception, right down to the film's final line. As Neapolitan actor/inmate Cosimo Rega returns to his cell, he slowly scans the four walls before turning directly to

camera. "Since I've known art," he says, "this cell has become a prison." The Tavianis were initially unsure about including the line, which came from Rega himself (now an author as well as an actor). "It seemed so powerful and such a perfect summation of the film that we wondered whether it was too perfect, or even maybe too didactic – something we've always tried to avoid," says Vittorio. "In the end, we agreed that it was more ambiguous than didactic – it leaves audiences with a question rather than an easy answer: does art provide salvation or suffering? On the one hand, you could really feel that Rega had reached a certain understanding, a certain complexity of thought. But the line is also terribly bittersweet: here is a man who, through his crimes and the consequences of these crimes, has always lived under a cloud. After his encounter with art, the clouds seem to have parted. But in the end, he's still incarcerated and unlikely to ever experience the outside world again."

At the Berlin Film Festival in 2012, *Caesar Must Die* won the Golden Bear, edging out the likes of Miguel Gomes's *Tabu* and Ursula Meier's *Sister*. "In the first part of a filmmaker's career, prizes are an important sign of acceptance by audiences and your peers. I think they become less important once a filmmaker becomes more established and well known," says Vittorio. "Over the past 20 years, when we've sent our films to major festivals, we've always asked for them to be screened out of competition to leave space for up-and-coming talent. The difference with *Caesar Must Die* was that we now had a film featuring men who had been forgotten by the outside world. A prize, more than recognition for us, would mean recognition for them. It was thinking of our inmate actors that we decided to present the film in competition."

Vittorio jokes that the presence of Mike Leigh as president of the jury may have boosted their chances. "We've always loved Leigh's films so we were pleased that he would be heading the jury. But when he told us that one of his earliest works as director was a production of *Julius Caesar*, we thought, 'That's it!'"

i 'Caesar Must Die' is released on 1 March, and is reviewed on page 91

We developed a real fondness for our actors. At the same time, we abhorred the terrible crimes they had committed. It's a contradiction we'll never resolve



DIVINE REALITY

A new retrospective of the films of Pier Paolo Pasolini and the rerelease of his powerful and mysterious 1964 retelling of the life of Jesus, *'The Gospel According to St Matthew'*, provide an opportunity to rediscover this most misunderstood and controversial of filmmakers

By Hannah McGill and, overleaf, Mark Cousins

As *'Life of Brian'* (1979), the Monty Python team's hyped and misrepresented satire on hype and misrepresentation, has shown us, Chinese whispers, wilful misreadings and the thoughtless peddling of received wisdom have an extraordinary combined power to deform reputations. Thus, although Pier Paolo Pasolini's 1964 film *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (*Il vangelo secondo Matteo*) is habitually praised as a key work both of the director's oeuvre and of world cinema as a whole, small myths have congregated about it nonetheless. You may hear that it's a Marxist life of Jesus, which flies in the face of the Catholic church. Or that it was an extraordinary, contrary story choice for a filmmaker who was gay, an outspoken Marxist and a staunch atheist. Others present it as the unadulterated Gospel, with nothing added or taken away in the service of plot. One hears nigh everywhere it's mentioned that it's gritty, raw and handheld; maybe that it's a quintessential neorealist text; frequently that it's got Billie Holiday on the soundtrack.

The last contention is simply wrong (the version of 'Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child' used over the baptism sequence is sung by Odetta, and Billie Holiday and Odetta don't sound alike). The Matthew Gospel is indeed the main source, certainly of the film's dialogue, which is sparse – except for Jesus's sermons and parables – but material from the other Gospels is used too, and more significantly, Pasolini ushers in the visual influence of religious art from many an anachronistic historical period. He himself described the film as a sort of palimpsest, "the life of Christ plus 2,000 years of storytelling about the life of Christ". As for the film's neorealist credentials, certainly it owes characteristics to the school during the rise of which Pasolini began his filmmaking career.

The Gospel According to St. Matthew (as it tends to be called in English, though the director might not have favoured the use of the honorific, having dropped it in Italian) favours untrained actors and powerless, penniless characters. It argues for the underdog, its noble char-

acters are by and large negative presences, and it isn't afraid to find elegance in the undecorated and the ugly. Pasolini's approaches to shooting landscapes and human faces, and to depicting and eliciting emotion, were unquestionably influenced by neorealism; it's in part the film's lack of awed formality and soft-focus sentiment that sets it apart from Hollywood Bible studies like *King of Kings* (1927), *The Robe* (1953) and *Barabbas* (1961), and keeps it feeling strikingly fresh today.

But just because it's raw by the standards of the studio epic doesn't mean that, as Roger Ebert has it, the film "tells the life of Christ as if a documentarian on a low budget had been following him from birth". The low-budget part might be accurate enough, but the standard contention that this is Jesus without glamour, magic or mystery seems to miss something key about Pasolini's practice. Indeed, the inclusion of unconventional music choices (Leadbelly also appears on the soundtrack, as well as the Congolese mass 'Missa Luba', Prokofiev and Bach) points to a rejection of the sort of unmediated naturalism with which critics have been oddly keen to credit the film. And to contend that Pasolini's Marxism and rejection of religious practice made this a rebellious or provocative choice is to ignore both the curious, respectful tone of the movie and its director's lifelong, unambiguous fascination with matters of faith.

Marxist he may have been – and a transgressor in the eyes of the Vatican for his 1963 short film *La ricotta*, which saw him accused of "insulting the religion of the state" and sentenced to four months in prison (he was pardoned) – but Pasolini was compelled by religious imagery and feelings, and was no straight-up hater of the Catholic church. The dedication that opens *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* – "To the beloved, happy, familiar memory of Pope John XXIII" – was sincere; he credited that popular and progressive Pope with the film's inception. In 1962 Pasolini visited Assisi at the Pope's invitation to participate in a seminar between Vatican



IMITATION OF CHRIST
Pasolini's vision of Jesus's life in *'The Gospel According to St. Matthew'* avoids the bombast of Hollywood versions



members and non-Catholic artists. But trapped in his hotel room by traffic jams caused by crowds awaiting the Pontiff, he instead sat and read the Gospels “straight through” – whereupon the notion of filming one of them “threw in the shade all the other ideas for work I had in my head”.

Though invariably categorised as a “devout atheist”, Pasolini resisted having his own stance decisively categorised. “If you know that I am an unbeliever,” he told a journalist in 1966, “then you know me better than I do myself. I may be an unbeliever, but I am an unbeliever who has a nostalgia for a belief.” Three years later he would tell another, “I am religious because I have a natural identification between reality and God. Reality is divine. That is why my films are never naturalistic. The motivation that unites all of my films is to give back to reality its original sacred significance.”

From his earliest work Pasolini engaged with unreality: restaging and pretence, artifice and performances-within-performances. Little wonder that a hero whose

future was mapped out, and whose possession of free will and even of ordinary human bodily functions were matters of intense theological debate, appealed. So too, to Pasolini the writer, did a story “of events already written”, as the academic Sam Rohdie has put it, “whose writing Christ enacts” – that of a sacred figure “born by linguistic means”. (Pasolini himself was to some extent fulfilling a story already written too: in 1963’s *La ricotta* he cast Orson Welles as a Marxist filmmaker working on a solemn arthouse life of Christ, the set of which is a foul-mouthed bacchanal.) Christ’s miracles are rendered not with smart special effects or coy evasions, but with crude cuts; somehow the refusal to attempt to fool us emphasises rather than reduces the sense of magic. The sheer scale of what the Gospels ask a true believer to accept is rendered unavoidable.

Then there’s Enrique Irazoqui, Pasolini’s Jesus. An economics student, Irazoqui reluctantly appeared in the film in exchange for Pasolini’s patronage of his anti-fascist group. He subsequently became a pro-

“I may be an unbeliever,” Pasolini told a journalist in 1966, “but I am an unbeliever who has a nostalgia for a belief”





TEENAGE JESUS
Pasolini cast a non-professional as his Christ: Spanish economics student Enrique Irazoqui

✦ fessor of literature and a master chess player. Though a non-actor, Irazoqui is no guileless peasant savant; his is a layered, fierce and strange performance that plays on Jesus's youth, mood swings and flashing charisma. He is also one of the great beauties of all cinema, possessed of a face at once stormy and sweet, with fathomless dark eyes and an infrequent but devastating smile. Yet despite the actor's loveliness – and Pasolini's own professed erotic interest in the notion of crucifixion ("in my fantasies there was expressly the desire to imitate Christ in his sacrifice," he wrote, "...sometimes I was nailed to the Cross completely nude... with my arms spread out, my hands and feet nailed, I was utterly defenceless" – this is a particularly sexless Jesus, whose Passion is notably uncarnal in its depiction.

Where Pasolini does allow a teasing ambiguity is in this Christ's changeable ethical positions, and his testy interaction with his disciples. It's the Jesus of Matthew's Gospel who blesses the meek but also declares that he comes "not to bring peace, but to bring a sword"; Pasolini manages to cut through centuries of scholarly conjecture by making this a simple case of a fiery temperament occasionally pushed to extremes. And Irazoqui's Sphinx-like aspect – the loneliness and sad containment he projects – addresses other contentious issues around Jesus the man: when and in what depth he knew his fate ahead of time; how far he could or did blame his betrayers or his Father for what he knew to be an inevitability. Pasolini's Jesus seems to know what's coming, but to be working out the meaning of it, coming to terms with it, as he goes.

Like the teenager Irazoqui still was when he played the part, he's prone to fits of resentment too. When Jesus goads the disciples with hints about their future treachery and castigates them for falling asleep while he prayed at Gethsemane, Irazoqui's air is of pettishness offset by mild, even satisfied resignation. But this Jesus can also seem capricious, attention-seeking – a popular kid prone to switching the rules of membership of his clique. In Pasolini's version, Jesus's manipulation of his disciples' feelings for him directly spurs Judas's betrayal. A woman approaches Jesus to apply expensive ointment to his head; Judas, obediently imitating Jesus's oft-stated stance on the relinquishment of material possessions, tells her off for undue profligacy. But Jesus abruptly changes his



tune, and admonishes Judas: "Let her alone; why trouble ye her?... Ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always." Injured and vengeful, Judas scampers off to deliver Jesus and claim his blood money.

Pasolini blends Gospels here: although both Matthew and Mark have Judas's betrayal directly follow the incident with the ointment, it's only John who has Judas be the one to confront the woman; Matthew just states that "the disciples were indignant". That simple stung feelings are given such a key role in Pasolini's proceedings risks a certain triviality, but also lends poignant humanity to the tale – as when, in his novel *The Master and Margarita*, published in 1966, Mikhail Bulgakov has Pontius Pilate condemn Jesus to the cross partly because he's distracted by an agonising migraine.

There's further human vulnerability in the hint of sexual jealousy identifiable in Judas's reaction to the sight of Jesus being handled by the woman (who is routinely identified as Mary Magdalene, though none of the Gospels confirms this; John identifies her as a Mary, possibly the sister of Lazarus). Judas watches the intimate liberty being taken; he fumes; he gropes for a reason to intervene, finds one, and explodes. Yet once more Pasolini, if he intended it at all, doesn't foreground this element. One senses that he might simply have seen it as logical that currents of desire would arise in a group of young male companions, particularly in the direction of a charismatic leader figure.

If many of his films, from the lusty *Mamma Roma* (1962) through to the still shocking *Salò or The 120 Days of Sodom* (*Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma*, 1975), highlight coporeal excess – violent, carnal, excretory, gastronomic – *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* adopts the soft asceticism of Irazoqui's persona as its defining mode. Even Salome's dance is strangely gentle and naïve, a spell woven by a child rather than an erotic display. It's human moods, rather than appetites, that seem to preoccupy Pasolini here; and it's the interaction between the inexplicable divine and the basely, tenderly, stropily human that makes his Passion play so moving – whether viewed by the believer, the unbeliever or the nostalgist for belief.



'The Gospel According to St. Matthew' is rereleased on 1 March. A Pasolini season plays at BFI Southbank, London from 1 to 14 March

THE INEXPRESSIBLE

If the filmmaker and author Pier Paolo Pasolini had never existed, what would we have missed? **By Mark Cousins**

If there was no one in our film encyclopedias between Robert Parrish and Ivan Passer, what would be missing in film culture? Or to put it another way, if you have yet to see Pasolini's films and read his poems and books, what lies in store for you?

I went to the Pasolini archive at the Cineteca di Bologna recently and I realised how many books about him I haven't read. At the archive, we talked about the photographs of his dead body taken after he was murdered on 2 November 1975 – which I haven't seen, and don't really want to. Perhaps because I've visited the houses where he lived and the bars where he drank, and because I first saw his films when I was 22 and firing on all cylinders, he is, for me, the most alive of filmmakers.

So without him, what would be gone?

1. THE STUPENDOUS

The simmering intensity in his films and writing. The word 'stupendous' appears a lot in the latter, but the films have the visual equivalent. Look at this image of Anna Magnani in *Mamma Roma* (1962).

Magnani was no stranger to the higher emotional registers, but this half-yelling, half-praying moment in the film – in which she plays a prostitute ground down by *borgata* life – is pure Pasolini. In the stupendous register in his work, there's a surging impatience with the everyday. This impatience is political (his characters often have subsistence lives) but also, in a way, mythic. People don't just live, they burn brightly. Their emotions and struggles are epic. *Mamma Roma* is herself and the city.

Pasolini wasn't unique in this, of course. Walt Whitman climbed those hills before him and a filmmaker like Peter Watkins came afterwards (Pasolini's *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* and Watkins's *Culloden*, both from 1964, always remind me of each other). But in Pasolini's films like *Theorem* (*Teorema*, 1968) and *Pigsty* (*Porcile*, 1969), there's often, at the end, an eruption in the story, a breaking-through to a higher register.



2. TONALITY

Pasolini's movies are as disinterested in smooth storytelling as Morrissey is in conventional harmonics. Scenes often end abruptly; there's a bluntness to the cutting and, in particular, the placement of close-ups in his films. Those who think Morrissey can't sing probably think that Pasolini can't direct, because in each case there is either a failure to find the key (the dissenter's view) or the ear is tuned to a different key. The affinity was made explicit when Morrissey released the song 'You Have Killed Me', whose first line is: "Pasolini is me, Accattone you'll be." The strangeness of Pasolini's tonality is similar to how Cézanne painted his wife in this image in the Met in New York. She leans to her left, the dado rail runs downhill and her arms are very long. All 'errors' that annoyed critics, and yet when you look at how, for example, her hair parting lines up with the front of her dress, other compositions begin to emerge.



3. CATHOLIC-MARXIST-GAY TRIANGLE

Marxists hate Catholicism because it keeps people on their knees; Catholics hate Marxists because they have no sense of the sacred; and Catholics condemn homosexuality because, well... why do they again? Anyway, Pasolini was all three, a one-man bag of ferrets. How come? He lashed the triangle together in *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, and the lashing held, but in *Theorem*, the tensile strength of his cinema threatens to give way.

Take this image: a close-up of the crotch of Terence Stamp, who plays a handsome, almost wordless "boy with a divine nature" (as Pasolini described him

to Stamp) who's visiting the grand house of a northern Italian industrialist and his family. The visitation is that of an angel of sorts, so there's the Catholicism, yet Pasolini has Stamp wear tight trousers, and films in close-up, and there's a bit of a bulge. He's reading Rimbaud and his



cigarette ash has just fallen onto his leg.

Like the strange angle of Madame Cézanne, this triangular close-up unbalances what could have been a good taste, stately-home film, by insisting on the disruptive power of eros. The mother, father, daughter, son and maid in the family all fall for the angel, and their world is unbalanced. The film is Marxist because it starts with a debate about workers and ownership and, in the end, the father has an epiphany, sheds his clothes and possessions, and gives the factory to the workforce. The triangle can't hold because eros causes a breakdown in the family and, by implication, in capitalism.





4. PIMPS AND SAINTS

Because of whom he took from and who then took from him, Pasolini's work makes unexpected linkages between film, painting and literature. If he hadn't existed, for example, it wouldn't be a hop, skip and a jump to get from Giotto's 'Last Judgement' (above), in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua, to Martin Scorsese's *Mean Streets*.

But there's a clear line. More than any other director, Pasolini imported into the movies the bold faces, emotions and compositions of pre-Renaissance Italian art. He played Giotto in his film *The Decameron* (1970), and in one scene (right) even recreated the painter's 'Last Judgement'.

Where film lenses naturally create some kind of separation between foreground and background, Pasolini works hard to remove such separation, pressing the angels, Christ, the damned on the right and the onlookers

on the left onto the same picture plane. As we look around this image we move between the profane, horrific, sacred and saved.

The profane, horrific, sacred and saved were the registers of Pasolini's first film *Accattone* (1961). Its people were pimps and saints at the same time. This is what Scorsese loved. He made his wise guys both profane and like Giotto characters.



5. THE RAGE AGAINST CONSUMERISM

In the era of the financial crisis and Occupy, only dingbats don't see that capitalism doesn't really work, and while there have certainly been more explicitly political filmmakers than Pasolini – Santiago Álvarez, the Third Cinema movement, Michael Moore etc – Pasolini is perhaps the most outraged. He doesn't so much argue a political case against the consumerism that he saw taking over Italy as decry it as the end of civilisation and call forth the apocalypse with an Old Testament rage that led to the uniquely bleak tone of his last film *Salò or The 120 Days of Sodom* (1975).

The Decameron was joyous, a celebration of vitality and sex, but it and the other two films which formed his 'Trilogy of Life' – *The Canterbury Tales* (*I racconti di Canterbury*, 1971) and *Arabian Nights* (*Il fiore delle mille e una notte*, 1974) – were set in 'times before', idealised moments when peasants were unalienated, when people had what Pasolini saw as real relationships with each other and with nature, not modern ones mediated by money, materiality and media. As consumerism got worse, Pasolini repudiated his trilogy. To say these things is to think not of other European directors but Senegal's Djibril Diop Mambéty. Like Pasolini, Mambéty saw consumerism as a force to ruin everything. His film *Hyenas* (1992, above) rages against it; as Pasolini did in his newspaper articles, Mambéty turns his ire on his own compatriots in the film, for falling for the shoddy bargain. You could argue that Mambéty, more than any other filmmaker, shared Pasolini's worldview.

6. THE DOCUMENTARIES.

In his documentary *Sopralluoghi in Palestina per il film 'Il vangelo secondo Matteo'* (*Scouting in Palestine for the Film 'The Gospel According to St Matthew'*, 1965), Pasolini speaks the commentary in the present tense, as if he is looking at the images and not reading a script. I don't know if this is how he actually did it, but what we get are lots of moments where he says "this person", "this landscape" etc. There's a rare directness in this, a present-tenseness that I loved when I first saw his documentaries (and which influenced my regular use of the words 'this' and 'here' in my documentary *The Story of Film: An Odyssey*).

7. THE BODY

OK, so Russ Meyer's films are very about bodies, and so are Claire Denis's, David Cronenberg's and Kenneth Anger's, but in Pasolini films, bodies are more signs of their times. Yes, they are products of his erotic imagination, but also of his political despair.

In this famous image from *Salò*, that despair is complete. Five guys torture a sixth. A web of 14 limbs. Everything is abject in *Salò*. Pasolini had decided that the one thing that even poor people used to own, their body, is no longer theirs. In his unfinished novel *Petrolio*, the bodies are even more wretched. Some in Italy think that *Salò*'s extreme depictions of sex added to the right-wing outrage that led to his murder.



8. THE SACRED

This shot, in *Theorem*, is one of the greatest in the movies, I think, and surely influenced the films of Bruno Dumont. The woman hovering in mid-air is the maid of the house. So intense is her love for the angelic Terence Stamp figure that, whereas the father of the house shed all his possessions, she has become transfigured. Crowds gather to marvel and fall to their knees. Only a handful of serious European directors (including Carl Theodor Dreyer and Lars von Trier) have attempted such overtly supernatural moments. Robert Bresson talked about the metaphysical but didn't often show it directly. Pasolini bursts out of any contained notions of realism and turns the maid into a firework.

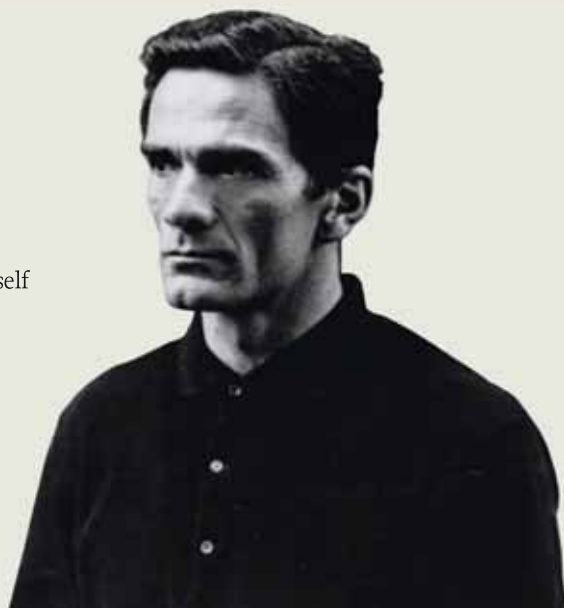


9. THE POETRY

This poem by Pasolini again uses the word “stupendous”. I have carried it around with me since 1987. You don't need me to point out why this is great, but notice “stupendous monotony”. Life's high is almost numbing.

When, a moment ago, I googled to find the image of the maid transfigured, an image popped up. It was Pasolini dead, covered in dried blood – the image I didn't see in Bologna. So now I have seen it. His arms are folded across his chest, his chin is raised. Some of the blood has gone black, to make the photo look like a painting by Rouault, or a scorched body, or the not quite believable image of a filmmaker who burned brightly.

‘Diary’
Grown up? – Never – never!
Like existence itself
Which never matures
Staying always green
From splendid day to splendid day-
I can only stay true
To the stupendous monotony
Of the mystery.
That's why I've never abandoned myself
To happiness,
That's why
In the anxiety of my sins
I've never been touched
By real remorse.
Equal, always equal,
To the inexpressible
At the very source
Of what I am.
(Translated by Lawrence Ferlinghetti
and Francesca Valente)



CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED

Based on Rachel Seiffert's English-language novella but shot in German, Australian director Cate Shortland's new film 'Lore' offers a new perspective on Germany at the end of WWII, seen through the eyes of a 15-year-old girl as she makes her way across the war-ravaged country

By Nick James

The chaos in Germany in the immediate aftermath of the German surrender to the Allies in 1945 provides the background to *Lore*, Cate Shortland's nicely judged refugee drama about a group of Nazi-raised children trying to make their way from Bavaria to the Baltic coast through a country that's now divided into separate military zones that allow no freedom of movement between them. The film is based on one of three novellas that make up Rachel Seiffert's *The Dark Room*, which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 2001 and praised for its minimal description and radically bare prose.

A similar stripped-back approach – combined with deep research – also informs Shortland's adaptation. The film opens with a well-heeled Nazi household in chaos as the uniformed Vati (dad), Mutti (mum) and various assistants burn papers and pack to leave for a remote farmhouse. There Mutti tries to fend for her five children (Vati having disappeared), but is physically abused in the local town and then arrested by the US military – having instructed her 15-year-old daughter Lore (pronounced Laura, short for Hannelore, and played by Saskia Rosendahl) to lead her siblings (including her baby brother) across Germany to join Oma (grandmother) on the Baltic coast. The film follows that harrowing journey, focusing in particular on Lore's need to grow up quickly after she finds out about her father's complicity in war crimes. Meanwhile, a relationship develops between her and Thomas (Kai Malina), a wandering Jewish youth liberated from the death camps, with whom she becomes fascinated despite her upbringing.

Having cut her teeth on the Australian TV series *The Secret Life of Us* (2001–2003) and *Bad Cop, Bad Cop* (2002–2003), Shortland made her name internationally with her first feature *Somersault* (2004), the atmospheric teen-runaway portrait that launched Abbie Cornish's career. Since then the director has taken time out to work with her filmmaker husband Tony Krawitz (*The Tall Man, Dead Europe*) as a volunteer in a township in South Africa, and to adopt two children from there. Her decision to make *Lore* came about after British producer Paul Welsh gave her a copy of Seiffert's book and her husband separately recommended it. I spoke to her in October during the BFI London Film Festival.

Nick James: A romance between a Nazi-raised girl and a Jewish boy released from the camps seems like a minefield of opportunities to offend. Were you intimidated?

Cate Shortland: I was equally terrified and mesmerised by the book. At 29 Rachel [Seiffert] was the youngest person ever to be nominated for the Booker Prize. And even when she talks about the book, her humanist intellect and compassion come through. She's not an absolutist – nothing's black or white, so it's all detail. Instead of it being this historical perspective, you feel like you're in the space with them. That was the most difficult part of making it – what kept me awake at night: not the fact that it was in German, not that I was shooting in another country, not that we had a baby to deal with; the really really really hard part of it was to make not an apologist film but one that says, "OK guys, this is what happened. You make up your mind what you make of this."

NJ: How much did you immerse yourself in that period?

CS: I worked with screenwriter Robin Mukherjee on the first two drafts, which Robin wrote. Then in Berlin I worked with this incredible script editor Franz Rodenkirchen, a great, non-judgemental person. The thing that helped me the most was the research I did on the Einsatzgruppen [mobile killing squads], because Lore's father is in them. So I looked into the euthanasia programme in Berlin – who ran it, doctors and lawyers, and how a lot of those people moved from the euthanasia programme to the Einsatzgruppen and ran that too, and all before the mechanisation of the Holocaust.

The research allowed me to see how romance was instilled in the ideology. After, say, the Einsatzgruppen had murdered pregnant women, children or a whole community from a village, they would often get very drunk. The people in the higher echelons heard about this and said, "You're not allowed to get drunk." Instead they gave them these really romantic lectures along the lines of, "You boys are doing the nasty work, but Germany is going to be Nirvana." People always say, "We don't understand the Holocaust," but when I looked at it piece by piece – that it was not just thugs but doctors and lawyers who were involved – that allowed me an 'in'. Instead of looking upon them as monsters I looked at them as if they were you or I.



ORPHANS OF THE STORM
As Lore (Saskia Rosendahl, above and right), the daughter of Nazis, crosses Germany in the aftermath of WWII, she falls in with Thomas (Kai Malina, far right), a Jewish survivor of the death camps





NJ: Were you always going to home in on Lore's point of view?

CS: I probably wouldn't have done the film unless there was that relationship between Lore and Thomas, because I'm a romantic. So I love that she starts the film without feeling, and then she meets this boy and he opens up all this desire and humanity in her. But then they commit this terrible crime together [the murder of someone who refuses to help them].

NJ: It's audacious of you to use this complex situation between them to describe sexual desire. Some people may not approve of that in this context. What's your defence?

CS: For me that [murder] scene crystallises everything, because she watches [Thomas] pick up the rock. She knows what he's going to do. And it's the connection between death and erotica. You're the first person that's ever spoken to me about that. But that's why I loved Franz, because he and I spoke about all these issues. And he would allow me to pull all that stuff out of the material. And so she sees him pick up the rock and walk towards her. And then after the crime is committed she's like, "What have we done?" In a funny way, that was Germany.

NJ: There's a terrific moment when she sees an Allied soldier and her morality makes her want to confess to the murder. The dilemma is really morally, sexually and emotionally complex.

CS: Even when we did research into women like Mutti, the mother, the connection between that kind of erotic power and Nazism was there.

NJ: Other filmmakers have looked at that in films like 'The Night Porter'. You also dwell on the beauty of the natural environment. Given that you want to describe romance and beauty at the same time as horror, how did you make your aesthetic decisions?

CS: It really all had to come back to the [Nazi] Party. Some theorists have said that National Socialism was a direct result of German Romanticism. And of course that's not true, but there's a thread that goes through, and that thread's also through the film. The idea of nature is incredibly important in National Socialism; so was the idea of Germany as a superior, more beautiful and powerful country than any other.

Adam Arkapaw – who shot the film – his grandfather walked out of Russia. So for Adam, designer Silke Fischer and me the first part of the design was not the wallpaper or the cushions. We got A3 maps and looked at the way the forest and the fauna changes from Bavaria to the Baltic. So the children start on hard ground – she starts playing hopscotch – and then by the time the film ends nothing's left, it's just mud [on the Baltic shore]. That's the way we looked at it: Germany being a character and, by the end, nothing's left.

NJ: How did you find the cast?

CS: I saw a photograph of Kai Malina on Google and he had this weird half-smile, but also this look in his eyes. I hadn't seen anything he'd acted in, but I felt he was the boy straight away, so we only met about nine boys – it turned out he'd been in *The White Ribbon*.

Saskia had three lines in another film, but at first I didn't want to cast her. The casting director showed me a photo of her, and I dismissed her in the first week because she's so beautiful. And then I met her, and she's so ridiculously intelligent. Her family is from the GDR, so her mum's first language is German, and then Russian, and



The photographs in Thomas's wallet are of my husband's family. That's his mother and his grandma and grandpa. So for us the film's very personal

then English, and Saskia speaks four languages. She was 17 when we shot the film and she's a dancer, so she has this robust intelligence and humanism with a massive physical capacity to work from instinct. If she chooses to, she can do a lot. But I don't know if she'll want to.

NJ: How much did you push Saskia on set?

CS: In the first day of casting she grabbed hold of Kai's shirt and screamed with her mouth open in his face. And he backed away, like "Uh!" She just let her legs go and he had to drag her across the ground. I mean, you don't really see that very often. It was like seeing two junkies having a fight in a train station – it was that visceral. With Kai I always said, "You're like a meth addict or something. You're like those guys that hang around train stations that you look at and you don't want to catch their eye."

NJ: And what about the young kids? They must have been pretty brave to face some of this stuff.

CS: We gave the script to their parents. All the kids are from the GDR, which was weird. Except for one boy – his family's from Russia. And the parents said they wanted the kids to read it all.

NJ: Do you have a German connection yourself?

CS: My husband's family are German Jews.

NJ: So that's another part of the appeal for you.

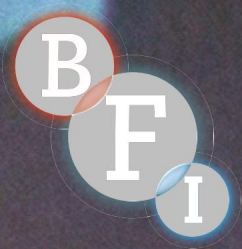
CS: Yeah. The photographs in Thomas's wallet are of my husband's family. That's his mother and his grandma and grandpa. So for us the film's very personal.

NJ: There's a sense of loss when Thomas leaves the film. Was the decision for him to go something you arrived at after a long process?

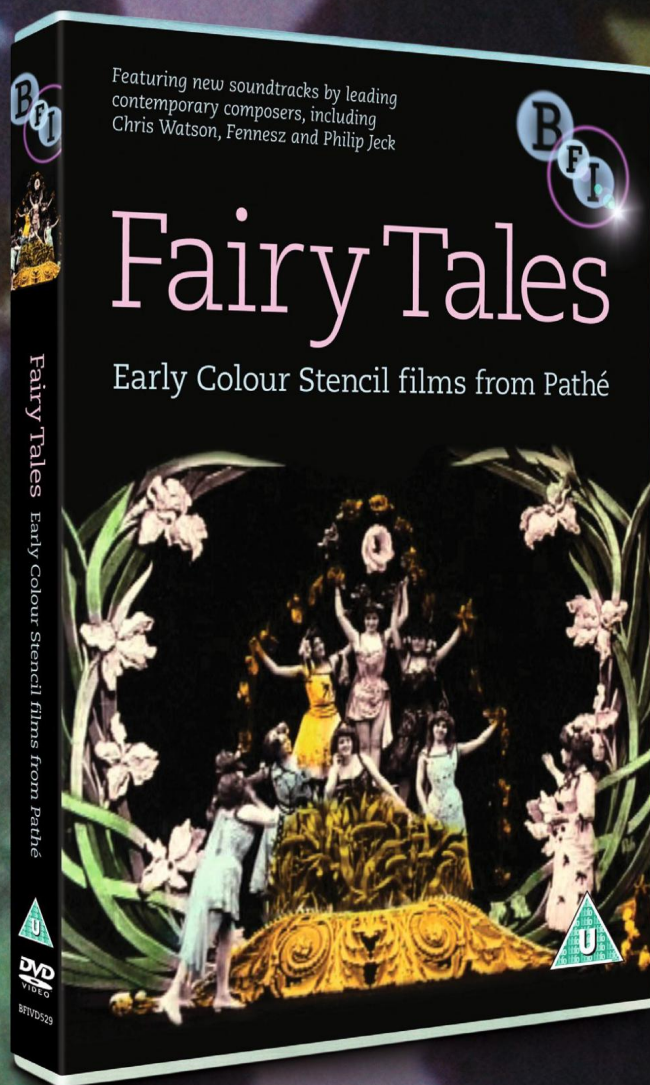
CS: Yes, because in Rachel's story he stays. What I wanted to do was to crystallise the themes, and for me Lore's strongest aspect is not her physical journey but her psychological journey under the ideology of a country that is morally bankrupt. Her parents are morally bankrupt. So she has to be in complete isolation to ask herself the question, "What will I do now as a human being?"

i 'Lore' is released on 22 February, and is reviewed on page 99

SOPHOMORE
'Lore' is the second feature by Australian director Cate Shortland, above, following her well-regarded 2004 debut 'Somersault'



FILMS OF WONDER



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THE ACTORS MONTGOMERY CLIFT

AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY

Even among the extraordinary half-dozen performances that launched Montgomery Clift's career in the late 1940s and early 1950s, his acting in George Stevens's 'A Place in the Sun' stands out for its complexity, ambiguity and the way it tapped into his own autobiography

By Eric Hynes

Even for a Hollywood icon, Montgomery Clift's was an impressively objectified face. With its emerald eyes and perfectly prominent brow, calligraphic nose and pouty feminine lips, his was a face worth queueing up for on Broadway – worth the most gratuitous of movie close-ups. But there was also a kind of genius in that face, and in what Clift did with the attention it attracted. Rather than revel in or repel our gaze – preen or retreat, then repeat – his face seemed to heroically absorb it.


Maybe he sought it, or maybe he didn't, but certainly he seemed ready for it. Even when alone in a room or isolated in frame, Clift's face carried the weight of a man watched. See how he weathers John Wayne's hostility in *Red River* (1948), how he outduels his legendary co-star by casually and skilfully playing the lightning rod, taking all that energy – the resentment, desire and envy – and corralling it inside. It's as if he's incapable of an uncomplicated expression; there's not a frame of film featuring that face that doesn't feel significant, that isn't suggestive of an idea or emotion, that isn't simultaneously approachable and unknowable.

At the start of George Stevens's *A Place in the Sun* (1951), Clift makes one of the greatest, most gasp-worthy of movie entrances, and of course it's all about the face. Beneath the opening titles, a man holding a suitcase walks backwards towards the camera as he tries to hitch a ride. At bust height he pauses, and just as the last title card fades, he turns around to reveal the perennially irresistible white T-shirt/black-leather-jacket combo, as well as that face, which Stevens pursues into extreme close-up. "Look," the shot says, "this is the beautiful Montgomery Clift!" Not, to be clear, the beautiful George Eastman – a name and character we've yet to learn – but the heroically posed, ambiguously grinning rising star. And in no way does that dull the impact of Stevens's exquisite tragedy; in retrospect it's quite enhanced – we're invited

to carry our adoration of that face, and of the actor in general, into the drama at hand.

In the film, an adaptation of Theodore Dreiser's grave 1925 novel *An American Tragedy*, George, a child of hand-to-mouth Chicago missionaries, decides in his early twenties to seek advancement via his mother's wealthy industrialist brother. Though he has no experience of living in cultured society, he's magnetised to it with an intensity that hints at entitlement. He gets caught between the two worlds, and like someone in a bear trap, his struggle to free himself only ensnares him further. But his ambition never plays as posing; he belongs among the privileged class, somehow, even if his crudeness means he can't stay there.

Audiences may not have known it at the time, but similar issues were at play in Clift's own childhood. As recounted in Patricia Bosworth's 1978 biography, the actor's mother was orphaned by Southern aristocrats, and spent her entire adult life campaigning for the restoration of her upper-class entitlement. Monty, along with his twin sister and older brother, was shuttled off to European cities to study languages, music and fine art with private tutors. They were kept from the rabble of their peers – a font for Monty's twinned undercurrents of isolationism and exceptionalism – but behaving like gentry often impoverished them.

For an actor who rose during the heyday of working-class naturalists like Clifford Odets and Irwin Shaw, however, that affect of gentility had to be eradicated – hence the strain behind Clift's everyman act, which involved unlearning the pseudo-patrician, pseudo-Anglo pose his mother forced upon him throughout his childhood (which was itself an unlearning of the dust-bowl drawl of his native Omaha, Nebraska). In *A Place in the Sun*, you can accept him calling his impoverished missionary mother "Mah", but your ears also seize upon it, 

IDEALISED COUPLE
Montgomery Clift told Elizabeth Taylor, his co-star in 'A Place in the Sun', right, that she was the only woman he would ever love



hearing something less natural than signposted, a representation rather than embodiment of class. Perhaps this is why his voice has never been fully persuasive. Not that it isn't effective – in moments it could be as unpredictably alive, as much a marvel of emitted interiority as Brando's.

This synchronicity between art and biography is manifested in Monty's dig-deep performance in *A Place in the Sun*, which goes from almost unbearable magnetism to slack-jawed resignation, as complex and troubling as anything he would ever do. In other performances from his early-1950s golden era, it's easier to determine what you should think of his characters. Sexual swagger and anachronistic charm fuel his turn in Wyler's *The Heiress* (1949), whereas Hitchcock's *I Confess* and Zinnemann's *From Here to Eternity* (both 1953) make good use of his steely self-possession to explore characters whose innate goodness brings them into conflict with a morally compromised society.

But in *A Place in the Sun* he's ambiguity and irresolution incarnate, simultaneously an object, a conduit and a sacrifice – a moving target even to himself. The shift in George's affections from Shelley Winters's Alice to Elizabeth Taylor's Angela – from a class equal to a class upgrade – happens so fluidly as to be almost unconscious. It's as if he's operating in a pure behavioural stupor, sincerely comforting his pregnant girlfriend in one moment and gleefully dashing into Angela's convertible in the next. Crucial to this effect is Stevens's preference for Ozu-esque single-take long shots in which Clift is positioned with his back to the camera, whether he's answering the phone in an adjacent room, receiving an adoring but distrustful gaze or kissing Taylor by the side of a lake. Clift's manner in these sequences is that of a man hunted, and yet we're with him every step of the way.

WRONG MOVES

Between Clift's ever-elegant, in-the-body integrity and Stevens's entrancing style, we're never really confounded by George's wrong moves. Rather than emphasise how he's morally obliged to marry the mother of his child, the film lets us indulge in his desire to be free of her. We find Alice just as repulsive as George does (Shelley Winters was one virtuoso pouter), and hope for the idyllic Clift-Taylor pairing as ardently as the lovers do. And for all the scoldings George receives in the final act – from the prosecuting attorney played by Raymond Burr, from the prison priest, from dear old mum herself – it's not a schoolmarmy moral burn we feel at the end of *A Place in the Sun*, but rather the unfairness of a life in which we can't have what we want, no matter how close we are to achieving it, no matter how much we think we deserve it. What George thought he'd earned was nothing less than Angela, a socialite who in turn fell hard and fast for the ruffian in her midst.

While the film's outcome asserts that class boundaries are ultimately impossible to transgress, our eyes receive a different message: these two celestial bodies belong together. From George's first sighting of Angela, all swirling dark features above a white evening dress, to her billiard-table seduction, in which her bare shoulders go from coyly off-angled to forward-facing and available, their matched-beauty pairing follows both a biological and cinematic imperative.



But that imperative is ultimately thwarted, just as it was for Monty and Liz in real life. Though frequently romantically linked, and the dearest of friends until Clift's death in 1966, their sexuality was incompatible. After growing up in isolation without any friends, Clift forged fierce attachments as an adult, and his bond with Taylor – who as a child star endured an unnatural upbringing of her own – was among the strongest. "You are the only woman I will ever love," he once told her, according to his friend Ed Foote, to which Taylor responded, "Baby, oh baby", over and over again." Perhaps even they assumed they belonged together – so hungry are their eye-locks in *A Place in the Sun* that one feels voyeuristic. But it wasn't to be.

TRADING UP
In *A Place in the Sun*, George Eastman (Clift, both pictures) rejects lower-class Alice (Shelley Winters, below) in favour of upper-class Angela (Elizabeth Taylor, above)

AESTHETIC SYMMETRIES

Perhaps that's just how we like it: intimations of perfect unions, of aesthetic symmetries and spiritual alignments, but in the end, tragedy. If we can't be devoured by Liz's violet eyes, why should Monty? If we can't



climb all over Monty in his white T-shirt and jeans, why should Liz? We speak of cinema as a machine for realising dreams, but it can also be a vehicle for seeing them dashed. The last third of *A Place in the Sun* plays like an extended undoing of everything that has been appealing in the first two-thirds, from George and Angela's mutual magnetism to Monty's textured charm. All that's left is a predictable jury trial and George's seemingly preordained doom. The sequence almost feels outside, or at least removed from, the story proper. George/Monty is once again an object, yet now of our condemnation. His beauty may have been superhuman, but the rabble need to affirm that his actions were not.

Of course, neither Monty nor his beauty could escape such a cosmic corrective. Just five years later he would drive his car into a telephone pole and literally break his face. Though he received extensive plastic surgery and continued to work (he even completed the film he'd been shooting at the time, *Raintree Country*), the ten years that followed for Clift were like a shadow on those that preceded them, his screen presence an uncomfortable reminder of what he used to be and what happened to him, his face a scabbed-over memory of its former beauty.

Like the denouement of *A Place in the Sun*, Clift's final decade was a march towards the inevitable – a death preordained and perhaps, in our dark perverted hearts, culturally desired. The film anticipated the fate of its own player, just as it had harmonised with his past. George/Clift paid not only for his class ambitions, but for that perfect visage. It was almost as if Monty's damaged face, much like Liz's subsequent farce of a career and public persona, was a reflection of one of our most damning desires: to watch beautiful people brought low.

Yet for all that was lost during those haunted final years – the mid-thirties through mid-forties, during which other male actors often come into their prime – Clift also gained a quality that had previously eluded him: relatability. In films such as *Suddenly, Last Summer* (1959) – another chapter in his cinematic martyrdom – *Judgment at Nuremberg* (1961) and especially John Huston's *Freud* (1962), his expressions are just a little sharper, his emotions a touch bigger (and his eyebrows a lot bushier), his resignation and melancholy unambiguously true.

Even though he was indeed an early pupil of the Actors Studio, and before that of the Group Theater, he was never the emoter that Brando was – never as inside-out. But that changed a bit after the accident. Suddenly Clift seemed simultaneously more self-conscious and less remote. According to many accounts his escalating alcoholism made him unreliable on set, but it may also have made him less withdrawn before the camera.

Right up until the end, Montgomery Clift's remained an impressively objectified face, but the nature of our objectification had changed. It became less about desire, appreciation and envy, and more about loss. It became less about what was there rather than about what was missing. In a way, it was a gift. Rather than vanish in that wreck of a car like Dean or Mansfield, Monty endured, his face an embodiment of mortality. Maybe it also helped us appreciate something too easily taken for granted. It's not like there's ever been too much beauty in the world.

i **'A Place in the Sun' has just been rereleased, and plays until 14 February at BFI Southbank, London**



In 'Red River' Clift outduels his legendary co-star John Wayne by casually and skilfully playing the lightning rod, taking all that energy and corralling it inside



FOCUS OF ATTENTION
From top: with John Wayne in 'Red River'; with Anne Baxter in 'I Confess'; post-accident, with Katharine Hepburn in 'Suddenly, Last Summer'



CHRIS MENGES

After starting out on documentaries in the 1950s, the great director of photography made his name working with Ken Loach before going on to collaborate with key British filmmakers – Stephen Frears, Alan Clarke, Billy Forsyth, Ireland's Neil Jordan – and winning Oscars for his two films with Roland Joffé. His diverse work shows a rare authenticity and commitment in its attitude to capturing natural light, colour and performances, and in its depiction of political struggle. **Interview by Jo Comino**

Jo Comino: You came into feature films through documentary. Did you have any formal or academic training?

Chris Menges: No. I could plough a field when I was 12, but I left school with no qualifications. When I was 16 I had a job as a filing clerk in London and by pure chance I was introduced to Allan Forbes and became his assistant. Allan was a filmmaker from the US who lived in London and he taught me pretty well everything. He taught me about sound, how to look after the camera, how to photograph scenes and about editing. He taught me that making a film involves an enormous amount of hard and carefully researched work. He introduced me to [DP] Brian Probyn and many other people, so that when he left Britain in 1959 I had other teachers. We made *No Governors* [1958], a film about buskers in the West End, *No Place to Hide* [1959], which was about the second march to Aldermaston, and *The Anonymous* [1958], about Padre Borelli in Naples. So he gave me an education in street cinema. Later people like Anna Popper taught me about light and I became Brian Probyn's assistant, and that's how I came to work on *Poor Cow* [which Probyn shot, 1967], and met Ken Loach, which led a year later to me photographing *Kes*.

JC: You'd worked for 'World in Action' too.

CM: In 1963 I worked for *World in Action* and I was lucky enough to work with Stephen Peet and Alex Valentine. Almost our first assignment was to go to South Africa where the 90-day law had been enacted when Mandela had been imprisoned. As an 18-year-old with a Bolex camera, looking very much like a tourist, I did my best, with Alex, to photograph what life was like under apartheid. We went to Bulawayo, in what was then Southern Rhodesia,

where many of the ANC comrades were based for their operations inside South Africa. Also I went with Michael Parkinson to the revolution in Zanzibar, where we got arrested and then evacuated on a navy destroyer.

Alex and I made a film in Angola about the 1963 revolution. We went to the Congo, Tanganyika and Cyprus during the struggle. Through *World in Action* I worked with many fine investigative journalists. For a kid who had come out of school with no education it was an amazing way to learn about the

COLLEAGUES ON MENGES

"Chris was one of my inspirations when I first left film school and he has continued to be such ever since. I believe his use of natural light is second to none and the strength of his cinematography lies in its deceptive simplicity and its total commitment to story."

Roger Deakins, quoted in a discussion forum on www.rogerdeakins.com

"We [Loach and Menges] wanted to light the space so that the light fell democratically but unostentatiously on everyone. Not only is it more pleasing that way, but the lighting isn't then saying, 'This is the leading actor in the scene or the film and these other actors aren't so important'. This is what we did on 'Kes', and it became a central tenet of how we worked."

Ken Loach (quoted in 'Loach on Loach', Graham Fuller Ed., Faber & Faber, 1998)

world. Then Adrian Cowell took me to Tibet where we made a film with the Khamba guerrillas fighting the Chinese. We spent a long time in Shan State, making a film about the Shans' aspiration for independence from the Burmese central government.

JC: At that point in your career you were crossing back and forwards between documentary and feature film.

CM: In 1967 I came back to London and the very next day I went to Cheltenham to be the operator on *If...* for Lindsay Anderson. The cinematographer was Miroslav Ondricek, who shot those early Milos Forman films *Peter and Pavla* [1963] and *A Blonde in Love* [1965]. There was a real respect for the people in those films. I learned a lot from Ondricek. The big influences of those times were Forman, Truffaut, Godard, the New Wave. [Raoul] Coutard was doing things that we all learned. I shot a lot of [TV] plays in the early 70s with Stephen Frears and one of the things we used to do was use a [Citroën] 2CV as a tracking-shot vehicle – and of course Coutard did that. So we learned that you could be free of all the lights and paraphernalia of filmmaking. You only had to have a belief in the story.

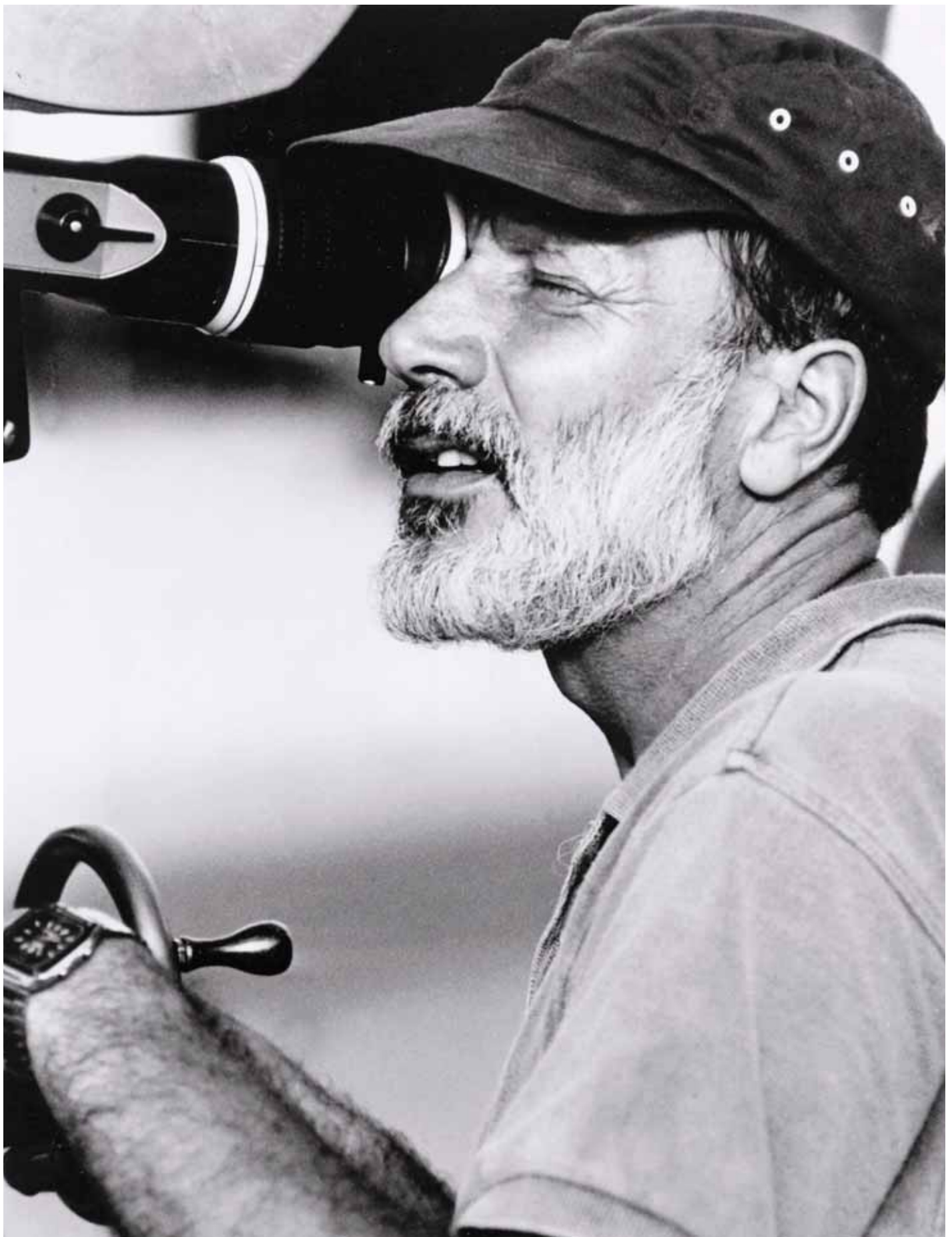
JC: When you come across a script, do you instantly start to visualise it?

CM: I have worked on two or three films where I haven't been moved or propelled by the story – it's like helping out a friend. But most of the work I've done has been on stories that you want to learn from. A well-written screenplay like, say, *Kes* is very insightful about Billy Casper, the life that he lived as a child. It's driven by a learning curve.

JC: What was it about the Milos Forman films that really appealed to you?

CM: *A Blonde in Love* and *Peter and Pavla* are very respectful, humorous





and on the ball – delightful stories photographed in a simple but caring way. But I was also interested in a more theatrical style. I understudied with Vittorio Storaro on two films. I love Vittorio's work with Bernardo Bertolucci, particularly the early films like *The Conformist* [1970], and I had the opportunity to do some work on *Reds* [1981].

The thing that we brought to *Kes* from *A Blonde in Love* was the simplicity – the respect for Billy Casper and his mates. Ken and I learned from standing outside the circle of the performance. We'd stand back on long lenses and try and catch the moment. It's like Cartier-Bresson says: if you never walk the streets, you'll never take a good picture.

The problem with having a vision for the stories is you have to be very careful you're not stepping on people's toes – you are, after all, serving the writer and the director. It's not about going to work for a pay packet, it's about being driven and finding inspiration all around. The new films coming out of France were liberating because before then we were ruled by a dogma: there is a correct way and there's an incorrect way to do something. We found out that that was all rubbish.

JC: That freshness comes across even in the opening shot of '*Kes*' – those two figures practically in the darkness in bed. It looks as if there's hardly any light at all.

CM: Ken Loach had already made *Cathy Come Home* [1966] with Tony Imi. Imi was a wonderful what I call 'wobblyscope' cameraman – very capable at handheld. Light can make something believable, give a scene great pathos, and great energy. I can think of ten or 15 films I've shot that I hope have enriched the tapestry of the writing and the acting. It was after I'd shot *Local Hero* [1983] for Bill Forsyth and *Angel* [1982] for Neil Jordan that David Puttnam hired me to work with Roland Joffé on *The Killing Fields* [1984]. It was because I'd done the documentaries that they trusted me, but if you look at the wonderful films Joffé did for the BBC, you know he is a man of vision with a fine eye. A DP can only live in the pocket of a good visual director – he cannot do it on his own. If he does it on his own it becomes something apart. The vision of *The Killing Fields* is



Sunset in Cambodia: '*The Killing Fields*' won Chris Menges the first of his two Oscars

definitely the director's.

It's the luck of the draw whether you work with exceptionally talented people who can help your work come to life. I remember having an interview with Karel Reisz to shoot *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and him saying, "Sorry, but you're not suitable"; I went to an interview with David Lean on his last film and I got a message back, "Sorry, you're not suitable"; Anthony Minghella said, "Sorry, you're not suitable." Terrence Malick came up to our little farm in Wales and climbed a mountain with me and at the end he said, "I'm sorry, you're not suitable." So you might achieve a few things, but you're going to also be rejected.

Michael Powell wrote a letter to Puttnam and

I loved working with Alan Clarke on 'Made in Britain'. I was operating the Steadicam, and we were as free as a bird

he asked, "Who are these cinematographers who light their vision with gold dust?" Shortly afterwards I got a phone call from him and he said, "Would you photograph my next movie?" I said, "Yes, yes" – and then Powell died. I loved working with Alan Clarke on *Made in Britain* [1982]. I was operating the Steadicam, and we were as free as a bird – there was no such thing as no – and then *he* died. One other person I should have worked with and didn't was Bill Douglas. He asked me to shoot *Comrades*. I'd just come home from working in Colombia on *The Mission*, and I was completely zonked and the phone rang and he said, "Will you come and do it?" And I just couldn't pull myself together to go to Australia. So, yeah, lots of disappointments.

JC: But there have also been a lot of very fruitful collaborations. Working with certain directors time and time again you must build up a rapport?

CM: I suppose so. But phone up Stephen Frears and he'll say I'm a tyrannical prima donna. Phone up John Mackenzie – he's



'Made in Britain'



'Kes'

in heaven – and say, “What was it like working with Chris Menges?” and he’ll say [*sucks in breath*], “Too serious.”

JC: Do you think of yourself as a perfectionist?

CM: Somebody who’s driven. There is no way of knowing if that’s good or bad.

JC: Are there any instances where you were faced with a challenge that you thought you wouldn’t be able to achieve?

CM: I just got a script from Tommy Lee Jones. Most of it is set at night in the prairies and I can see no way to deliver that, so I said, “No, I can’t do it.” I couldn’t see how, on a low budget, to deliver night on the prairies.

JC: Are there challenges you’ve met that you feel particularly satisfied with?

CM: There are films like *Kes*, *The Reader* [2008], *Made in Britain*, *The Killing Fields*, *Angel* and *Michael Collins* [1996] where there is smashing work that I’m proud of, but they are also riddled with inconsistencies. So much of what you do is dependent on writing, performance, directing and technical problem-solving that it would be surprising if sometimes it didn’t go well.

JC: In ‘*Michael Collins*’ there are huge crowds of people to muster.

CM: There were. They all gave their services for nothing. Five thousand people turned up and didn’t need a penny. I don’t see this a cinema of exploitation but one of participation and devotion. I always said you’re a wise person if you work on location and not in a studio, not because there are not great designers, but because real locations may pose particular problems but they also bring huge curiosities. There’s nothing more fascinating than filming in a real place that’s been developed and built over many years, through many minds – it gives a patina, a feeling.

JC: In terms of location, you seem to have a facility for lighting colossal spaces like, for example, the cathedral in ‘*The Mission*’ (1986).

CM: It might need a lot of rigging and hours and you may have to plan it and work with a great crew – because there’s no point having a great idea if you haven’t got a great crew – but the instinct of where to go with a camera comes from what you’ve learned doing documentaries and watching and looking at pictures and having good discussions with designers.

JC: How important to you is colour? Do you think in terms of temperature when you’re lighting?

CM: In all the colour films I’ve done, the energy of colour plays a very important part. I tend never to correct anything – I always let colour live as the film [stock] responds to it. Look at the colour in this room. I would definitely replicate this colour in here: the yellow of the sun, the blue of the sky, the green of the grass, the greyness of the hill – I would try and capture all of that. If you believe light can heal, which I do, if you believe light can give a story energy or pathos, if you believe that light is a way of expressing the truth, then colour is an intrinsic part of that because colour is an intrinsic part of light.

JC: You wouldn’t separate the two?

CM: Never, no, though I might exaggerate it. But you can just take a picture with a camera and you can see what the real light is doing and then



Kind of blue: ‘*The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*’, a rare US project for Menges

you just recreate it. It’s really deceptively simple.

JC: Sometimes the way a story comes across seems to be in terms of warmth and coldness. There’s a great scene in ‘*The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*’ (2005) in a Mexican bar and it’s very warm and Pete (Tommy Lee Jones) is looking out to the landscape, and then it cuts between him and Rachel (Melissa Leo) talking on the phone, and where she is it’s very blue, quite cold.

CM: It’s actually almost green, green-blue. I’ve always used fluorescent tubes. Even way back in the early 70s I was using big metal boxes of fluorescent tubes. Sometimes you mix a green and a blue and get really interesting colours. That was to create a certain tension between them.

JC: How did you find working on ‘*Notes on a Scandal*’ (2006)?

CM: I liked that a lot of it was handheld, so that the camera was reacting to the performance. That’s the great thing about a hand camera: you’re not really pre-planning how the story’s going to be told. You have a rough idea of what you want to capture, but a handheld will catch the writing. That might be more exciting than becoming pedantic with dollies and tracking and lots of r8Ks [lights]. Living the moment can give you real satisfaction. When it fails, you have to laugh – or cry.

The Killing Fields now looks quite old-fashioned. For *The Opium Warlords* [1974] I went to Burma on my own with Adrian Cowell: he did the sound, I did the photography, he produced, I produced. There was no one else with us except the Shan army. I didn’t have an assistant, I loaded the magazines myself, I did

my own focus. Because you’re not going to see any rushes or dailies – and, in fact, lots of our negative was not processed for 16 months, it remained hidden in caves in polystyrene boxes unprocessed, and we never did see any rushes till we got home – and because I didn’t have an assistant, I tended to shoot all *The Opium Warlords* on a long lens, because with a long lens and a ground-glass mirror shutter camera you can tell if you’re in focus or not. If you’re on a wide-angle you can’t be absolutely sure, so I tended to shoot everything on tight lenses. It’s very difficult, so you have to pan and track and move to show parts of a scene as it unfolds – and that’s what Roland [Joffé] wanted on *The Killing Fields*. And that’s what the operator Mike Roberts and myself and the crew gave him. We gave him his vision of what Bruce Robinson’s script was. With a fantastic script and great actors, how could you fail?

JC: Have you done much shooting in digital?

CM: I’ve done two films. I’ve enjoyed the increase of exposure latitude – the considerably higher ASA with a possibility of a greater colour range.

JC: Would you say that your work as a cinematographer had a signature? Could you pick out a style of shooting?

CM: Not in a feature film, but I could in certain documentaries. There it’s a question of responding to what’s happening in front of you. Otherwise you would have to phone up Frears or [Stephen] Daldry or Joffé [and ask them].

JC: If I had to pick out something about your style, it would be something quite general, to do with the antithesis of flatness.

CM: You’re right. Energy’s very important.





'Michael Collins'



1963 'World in Action' episode, 'Tibet'



'The Opium Warlords'

JC: Often when you get a figure, perhaps standing by a doorway, you get a sense of where they are from the light that's falling on them. That seems to be something that not every cinematographer would bother with.

CM: Energy and light are a very important part of storytelling. It's hard to explain why you do things in a certain way.

JC: I'm thinking of one of the most recent films you've shot, 'Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close' (2011). There's one scene where the boy is in his apartment, going backwards and forwards to look out of the window at his grandmother across the street with the Renter (Max von Sydow's character). And there's a light that falls on him as he goes by – quite a subtle touch.

CM: It's about just trying to make a story vibrant. [On that film] I think they put too much on the kid. I remember the continuity person saying, "Well, in the wide shot you held it like this, so in the close-up we want you to do the same." So I'm sitting there behind the camera thinking, "You're silly, because you don't know if we're ever going to use the wide shot or the close shot. Why fill the child up with rubbish?" I mean, awful. If you want spontaneity then you've got to treat the kid like the way we treated the kid on *Kes*. You've just got to catch performance.

JC: Can you say a bit more about how that worked on 'Kes'?

CM: Whatever David Bradley did, there was something about him and his understanding of the story and Barry Hines's writing that you could believe. So it was a most touching and believable performance. Our main job was to keep up to speed – to be as quick as he was. His mind worked fast. He had a great sense of humour. Our job was to catch the moment.

JC: How was he picked out?

CM: Barry wrote the book [*A Kestrel for a Knave*] about a school in Barnsley where he taught Physical Education and English. When [producer] Tony Garnett and Ken Loach approached him about turning the book into a film, Barry invited them up to the school in Hoyland and Ken went to the classroom where Barry taught, and the extraordinary thing was that he picked David Bradley out of that classroom – he chose him there and then. And then our main job was to catch his performance without in any way putting any pressure on him. So all you had to do was live the story and understand the story

and feel for the story and capture it as sympathetically as possible.

JC: The features you've made as a director all seem to involve children.

CM: I've got several children and I like to explore relationships between children and adults. The last film *The Lost Son* [1998] is more about the anger of the way people treat children. The film I like the best out of all of those is *A World Apart* [1987]. Shawn Slovo's writing has a real sense of what it's like to be a child in a family dominated by politics. I'd been in South Africa with *World in Action* during 1965, which is the period in which Shawn's script is set, so I had some knowledge and understanding, which emboldened me.

JC: 'A World Apart' was your first fiction feature as director. How did you make the move into direction?

CM: Quite easily. It wasn't a difficult film to

'A World Apart' has a real sense of what it's like to be a child in a family dominated by politics... It was totally believable

make. Once Working Title had agreed, it was quite a quick and successful shoot. I'd learned from very many good directors how I should go about the work. And because of my experiences in South Africa I was armed with much of the story. So to my mind it was totally believable and accessible. It was a good story, one that I could relate to. And we had Jodhi May.

JC: Do you think you'll direct anything else?

CM: If I find something brilliant, yeah. I remember that after *A World Apart* Disney wanted me to do *White Fang* and I was desperate to do it because I remembered reading Jack London as a kid. But the script ended up being what I call a puppy-dog movie and I didn't want to turn a Jack London story into that, so I left it.

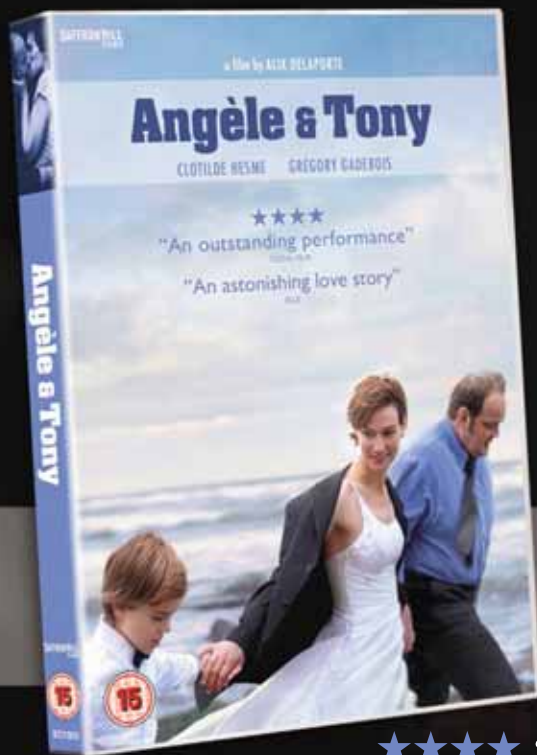
JC: The most recent film you've shot, 'Hummingbird', is due for release in May. Have you worked on anything since that?

CM: No. That finished in October. I'm just working here on the farm. If something great comes, I'll do it, because I love it. It's a real passion. 📞

i Chris Menges will be in conversation on 1 March at The Courtyard, Hereford, part of the Borderlines Film Festival, which will also be screening a selection of his films



Child's play: Menges has often been drawn to films about children, such as 'A World Apart'



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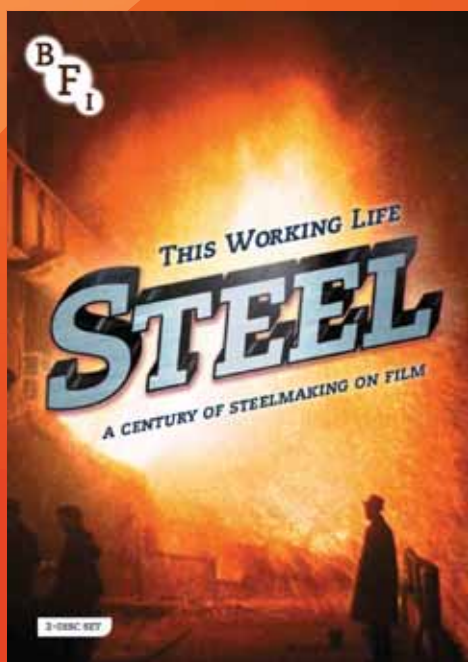
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CHILD ACTORS OF THE SILENT ERA



Bruce Guerin



Jack Hanlon with Buster Keaton in 'The General'



Louise LaPlanche in 'The Hunchback of Notre Dame'



Vondell Darr in 'The City That Never Sleeps'

2012 saw the passing of a few more of our last links to the silent era – its child actors.

By Bob Mastrangelo


While silent cinema was rather unexpectedly back in the spotlight in 2012 thanks to *The Artist* and *Hugo*, we also moved closer to the day when our few remaining links to that era will be severed as our last vital witnesses to it are lost. Among those who worked as adults during the silent era, two centenarians – screenwriter Frederica Sagor Maas and actress Pola Illéry – both passed away last year. But 85 years after the coming of sound, surviving silent veterans are most likely to be the era's child actors, and they too are leaving us.

The most prominent of these to die in 2012 was Bruce Guerin, 93, who played the orphaned

child taken in by George K. Arthur and Georgia Hale in Josef von Sternberg's debut film *The Salvation Hunters* (1925), and also appeared in early works by Raoul Walsh, Tod Browning and Frank Borzage. The others were further down the credits and sometimes uncredited, but together they helped define the era: Peggy Ahern, 95, co-starred in more than half-a-dozen instalments of Hal Roach's popular *Our Gang* series during its earliest years; Jack Hanlon, 96, was also in a couple of *Our Gang* entries, had a bit part opposite Buster Keaton in *The General* (1926) and, most

Abandonment and adoption seemed to be the standard modes for many child actors of the time

notably, played the orphan adopted by James Murray in William Wyler's silent-talkie hybrid *The Shakedown* (1928). Indeed, abandonment and adoption seemed to be the standard modes for many child actors of the time. Vondell Darr, 93, played Louise Dresser's daughter, given up for adoption in James Cruze's *The City That Never Sleeps* (1924), and Louise LaPlanche, also 93, reportedly played Esmeralda as an infant, stolen from her crib, in Lon Chaney Sr's version of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1923).

These were not the last of the silent-film veterans, but their ranks are rapidly thinning. Considering how shabbily we treated silents for so long – from destroying film prints or allowing them to disintegrate to marginalising them in the history books – the least we can do is pay better attention to the last representatives of this glorious period. 

January to December 2012

Compiled by Bob Mastrangelo

 Denotes an extended obituary
at bfi.com/sightandsound

ACTORS

R.G. Armstrong, 95: character actor who was a familiar face in westerns, seen on either side of the law (*Ride the High Country*; *El Dorado*).

Luke Askew, 80: played the hippie hitchhiker in *Easy Rider*, a chain-gang guard in *Cool Hand Luke* and the vicious Automatic Slim in *Rolling Thunder*.

Awashima Chikage, 87: Japanese actress, prominent in the post-war period (Toyoda's *Marital Relations*; Ozu's *Early Spring*; Naruse's *Summer Clouds*).

Turhan Bey, 90: actor almost invariably seen in exotic tales, especially in the 1940s (*Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*; *The Climax*).


Anita Björk, 89: secured her place in film history with the title role in Sjöberg's *Miss Julie* and also starred in Bergman's *Secrets of Women*.

Ernest Borgnine, 95: one of Hollywood's best-loved, first-rank supporting players (*From Here to Eternity*; *The Wild Bunch*; *The Poseidon Adventure*) who gave the performance of his life in *Marty*.

Peter Breck, 82: had some lead roles in the early 1960s, most significantly as the reporter at the centre of *Shock Corridor*.

Faith Brook, 90: distinguished stage actress occasionally seen in films (*The Intimate Stranger*; *Eye of the Needle*).

Frank Cady, 96: character actor frequently seen in small but memorable parts (*Ace in the Hole*; *Rear Window*; *The Bad Seed*).

 **Harry Carey Jr.**, 91: veteran of westerns, among the last surviving members of John Ford's stock company (3 *Godfathers*; *Wagon Master*; *The Searchers*).

Maria Pia Casilio, 76: played the pregnant maid Maria in *Umberto D* and co-starred with Alberto Sordi in *An American in Rome*.

Tsilla Chelton, 93: veteran French actress known internationally for playing the title role in *Tatie Danielle*.


Denise Darcel, 87: French actress in Hollywood, typically as exotic beauties (*Westward the Women*; *Vera Cruz*).

Michel Duchaussoy, 73: French supporting actor known for his roles for Chabrol (*Que la bête meure*; *Nada*).


Michael Clarke Duncan, 54: massive actor who had the role of his career in *The Green Mile*, but was subsequently underutilised.

Charles Durning, 89: popular character actor who started playing cops, then showed great skill at comedy (*Dog Day Afternoon*; *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*; Mel Brooks's *To Be or Not to Be*).

William Finley, 71: creepy actor in horror films and a familiar face in De Palma's work (*Sisters*; *Phantom of the Paradise*).

 **Harry Fowler**, 85: seemingly ubiquitous character actor cast in cockney roles (*Hue and Cry*; 1952's *The Pickwick Papers*).

Al Freeman Jr., 78: resisted the stereotyped roles available to African-American actors in the 1960s (*Dutchman*) and later played Elijah Muhammad in Lee's *Malcolm X*.

 **Ben Gazzara**, 81: unpredictable and sometimes explosive actor (*Anatomy of a Murder*) especially noted for his performances for Cassavetes (*The Killing of a Chinese Bookie*).


Andy Griffith, 86: actor with a homespun style who was underused in films after finding wider fame on TV (*A Face in the Crowd*; *No Time for Sergeants*; *Waitress*).

Bruce Guerin, 93: see box page 58.

Larry Hagman, 81: played the scheming J.R. Ewing on TV's *Dallas* and had some notable film roles (*Fail-Safe*; *Primary Colors*).

Roger Hammond, 76: veteran small-part actor (*Persuasion*; *The King's Speech*).

Levon Helm, 71: musician and singer with The Band (*The Last Waltz*) who also started acting in the 1980s (*Coal Miner's Daughter*).

 **Celeste Holm**, 95: specialised in wisecracking, sophisticated second leads (*Gentleman's Agreement*; *All About Eve*; *High Society*).


Whitney Houston, 48: celebrated but troubled pop singer who starred in films in the 1990s (*The Bodyguard*; *The Preacher's Wife*).

Pola Illéry, 103: Romanian-born actress in France of late silents/early talkies, whose most famous role was the female lead of Clair's *Sous les toits de Paris*.

Inoue Yukiko, 97: actress who played Dora, one of the title roles in Shimizu Hiroshi's late-silent *Japanese Girls at the Harbor*, and also acted for Ozu.

Erland Josephson, 88: Swedish actor known for his decades-long collaboration with Bergman (*Scenes from a Marriage*; *Fanny and Alexander*) and for starring in Tarkovsky's last two films.

Alex Karras, 77: American football player turned actor who punched out a horse as Mongo in *Blazing Saddles* and was James Garner's gay bodyguard in *Victor/Victoria*.

Günther Kaufmann, 64: German actor who was a semi-regular of 

ACTOR

HERBERT LOM




17/9/1917 – 27/9/12

Herbert Lom was one of the finest purveyors of villainy in the shady world of the British *film noir*. Short but well built, he had hooded eyes and honeyed bass tones that could instil fear into minor criminals as varied as Richard Widmark in *Night and the City* (1950, pictured) and Peter Glenville in *Good-Time Girl* (1947). Occasionally Lom would be allowed to play upstanding characters such as the psychiatrist in *The Seventh Veil* (1945) or Gino, the hero's best friend in *Hell Drivers* (1957), but it was Lom's Soho persona that gained him one of the finest roles of his career. His performance as Louis the hood in *The Ladykillers* (1955) is a masterclass in the art of great comedy acting – by playing William Rose's script absolutely straight.

Lom was born Herbert Charles Angelo Kuchacevich ze Schluderpacheru in Prague,

and fled to the UK just before the German invasion of Czechoslovakia. During the war he worked as an announcer for the BBC Overseas Service, making his British film debut in 1941 as Napoleon in *The Young Mr. Pitt*.

Over the next 20 years Lom would variously portray characters of Greek, French, Arab and Italian origin, in the process effortlessly stealing scenes from those billed above him. His increasingly demented Chief Inspector Dreyfus is one of the highlights of *A Shot in the Dark* (1964) and subsequent *Pink Panther* sequels, while his sensitive portrayal of Hammer's *The Phantom of the Opera* (1962) deserves to be better known. Lom was still acting well into his eighties and if, as he once lamented, "in English eyes, all foreigners are villains," few could have transcended type-casting with such verve.  **Andrew Roberts**

 Fassbinder's films and TV productions from *Gods of the Plague* to *Querelle*.

David Kelly, 82: actor who gained wider prominence late in his career with his roles in *Waking Ned* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

Rajesh Khanna, 69: romantic hero of Bollywood and one of its first 'superstars' (*Aradhana*; *Do Raaste*; *Anand*).

Jack Klugman, 90: played Juror #5 in 12 *Angry Men*, Jack Lemmon's AA sponsor in *Days of Wine and Roses* and the definitive Oscar Madison on TV's *The Odd Couple*.

Elyse Knox, 94: leading lady of the 1940s, first at Universal, then at Monogram (*The Mummy's Tomb*; *I Wouldn't Be in Your Shoes*).

Sylvia Kristel, 60: see box.

George Leech, 90: stuntman noted for his long association with the Bond films from *Dr. No* to *A View to a Kill*.

Herbert Lom, 95: see box page 59.

Susanne Lothar, 51: German actress known for her work with Haneke (1997's *Funny Games*; *The White Ribbon*), and also recently in international films (*The Reader*).

Richard Lynch, 72: played a steady stream of villainous, often psychotic characters (*God Told Me To*; *The Sword and the Sorcerer*).

Tony Martin, 98: crooner and a leading man of Hollywood musicals (*Ziegfeld Girl*; *Casbah*).

Joaquín Martínez, 81: Mexican actor in Hollywood noted for his supporting roles in *Jeremiah Johnson* and *Ulzana's Raid*.

Russell Means, 72: controversial Native American activist who later took up acting (Mann's *The Last of the Mohicans*; *Pocahontas*).

Patricia Medina, 92: British-born leading lady in Hollywood, frequently in costumers (*Fortunes of Captain Blood*), as well as in Orson Welles's *Confidential Report/Mr. Arkadin*.

Henning Moritzen, 84: Danish actor who played Liv Ullmann's husband in *Cries and Whispers* and the family patriarch in *Festen*.

Mario O'Hara, 66: Filipino actor in Lino Brocka's theatre group and films, latterly a director too.

Lupe Ontiveros, 69: Mexican-American actress who fought to be cast as more than just stereotypical maids (*Selena*; *Chuck & Buck*; *Real Women Have Curves*).

Mila Parély, 94: played Genevieve in *La Règle du jeu* and also had major roles for Bresson, Cocteau and Max Ophüls.

Joyce Redman, 96: shared a famously lustful meal with Albert Finney in *Tom Jones* and was Emilia in Olivier's *Othello*.

Lina Romay, 57: actress of horror and exploitation fare and the long-time wife/muse of Jess Franco (*Female Vampire*; *Lorna the Exorcist*).

Ann Rutherford, 94: played Andy Hardy's long-suffering girlfriend Polly, Scarlett's sister Carreen in *Gone with the Wind*, and Red Skelton's leading lady in three comedies.

Dinah Sheridan, 92: had her biggest hit with *Genevieve*, and a comeback two decades later with *The Railway Children*.

Dara Singh, 83: muscular action star of Hindi cinema (1962's *King Kong*; *Faulad*).

Victor Spinetti, 82: actor known for his comic performances, especially opposite The Beatles (*A Hard Day's Night*; *Help!*; *Magical Mystery Tour*).

ACTOR

SYLVIA KRISTEL



28/9/1952 – 18/10/2012


The name of uninhibited Dutch model/actress Sylvia Kristel became synonymous with that of her best-known character, Emmanuelle. She was an 'erotic film star' – the solemn face, innocent persona and unreconstructed body of a generation. *Emmanuelle* (1974, pictured) was one of her first films – she allegedly stumbled into the audition en route to a casting for a soap-powder commercial. She was paid a fee of \$6000 for what became the first and the biggest film mainstream softcore release; despite an initial ban by the French government, censorship laws changed and it played for nearly a decade on the Champs-Élysées, while finding audiences in the millions worldwide. In the UK, however, the film was X-rated and subject to heavy cuts (the uncut version did not appear until 2007).

Shot on location in Thailand, the film was based on the erotic novel by Emmanuelle Arsan (the pen name of Thai novelist Marayat Rollet-Andriane), telling the story of a bored diplomat's wife who is initiated into a different world by an older man (Alain Cuny). *Emmanuelle* epitomises a back-lit vision of 1970s centrefold sex, neither gymnastic nor gynaecological but aspirational, exotic, soft-focused, serious and sometimes melancholic, with lots of

diaphanous drapes and wicker furniture.

Kristel's filmography would total nearly 60 titles, including a string of *Emmanuelle* sequels alongside films by Claude Chabrol, Roger Vadim, Alain Robbe-Grillet and Walerian Borowczyk (1976's *La Marge*, co-starring Joe Dallesandro). In Hollywood she made *The Concorde – Airport '79* and comedies such as the *Get Smart* vehicle *The Nude Bomb* (1980) and *Private Lessons* (1980), in which she plays a French housekeeper sexually initiating a 15-year-old boy. She later appeared in Cyrus Frisch's *Forgive Me* (2001), alongside a cast of outsiders and disabled actors, and directed a short animation, *Topor and Me* (2004), about the art scene in 1970s Paris.

Nothing about Kristel's life appeared to be straightforward. Her 2006 autobiography *Nue (Nude)* details her Calvinist upbringing, strict education, a series of volatile relationships (including several years with British actor Ian McShane), poor business decisions and addictions – to alcohol, cocaine and above all cigarettes. She was a heavy smoker from the age of 11, and in 2001 contracted the throat and lung cancer that would eventually lead to her death.

"You're much better off as a love goddess to die around the age of 40," she stated. "You save yourself a lot of trouble."  **Jane Giles**

Warren Stevens, 92: co-starred as a tyrannical movie producer in *The Barefoot Contessa* and the ship's doctor in *Forbidden Planet*.

Martha Stewart, 89: starlet who played Joan Crawford's friend in *Daisy Kenyon* and the murdered hat-check girl at the centre of *In a Lonely Place*.

Joan Taylor, 82: leading lady of the 1950s sci-fi cult classics *Earth vs. the Flying Saucers* and *20 Million Miles to Earth*.

Phyllis Thaxter, 92: Van Johnson's wife in *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* and John Garfield's in *The Breaking Point*, she later played Ma

Kent to Christopher Reeve's Superman.

Susan Tyrrell, 67: actress with a taste for eccentric roles (*Fat City*; *Forbidden Zone*; *Cry-Baby*).

Simon Ward, 70: was in demand for leads and second leads after playing the title role in *Young Winston*.


Nicol Williamson, 75: intense, tempestuous actor whose screen roles included Sherlock Holmes (*The Seven-Per-Cent Solution*), Merlin (John Boorman's *Excalibur*) and Hamlet for Tony Richardson.

William Windom, 88: played supporting roles beginning in the early 1960s, often as figures of authority (*To Kill a Mockingbird*; *Brewster McCloud*).
Yamada Isuzu, 95: see box.

ANIMATION

John Coates, 84: animation producer with George Dunning's TVC (*Yellow Submarine*; *The Snowman*; *When the Wind Blows*).


Tissa David, 91: a pioneer among women animators, she worked with Jean Image, UPA, the Hubleys and Richard Williams (*Bonjour Paris*; *Raggedy Ann & Andy*).

 **Fyodor Khitruk**, 95: celebrated Russian animator who balanced adult, stylised works (*Story of a Crime*; *Island*) with children's tales, notably his *Winnie the Pooh* adaptations.

Dorise A. Lanpher, 76: special-effects animator with Disney (*Pete's Dragon*; *Beauty and the Beast*) and Don Bluth (*The Secret of NIMH*).

Bretislav Pojar, 89: one of the great Czech animators who worked in various animation forms, most notably stop-motion puppetry (*The Lion and the Song*; *Hey Mister*; *Let's Play*).

Mel Shaw, 97: storyman and designer for Disney (*Bambi*; *The Rescuers*).

 **Run Wrake**, 47: garnered attention, and earned a Bafta nomination, for his animated short *Rabbit*.


CINEMATOGRAPHERS

Christopher Challis, 93: had fruitful collaborations with Powell & Pressburger, Donen and others (*The Tales of Hoffman*; *Arabesque*; *Genevieve*).

Alain Derobe, 76: French cinematographer (*Tropic of Cancer*) who became a leading 3D authority and stereographer (*Pina*).

Ashok Mehta, 65: emerged in the 1980s as one of India's leading cinematographers (*36 Chowringhee Lane*; *Bandit Queen*).

Marco Onorato, 59: cinematographer known for his association with Matteo Garrone (*The Embalmer*; *Gomorrah*).

 **Harris Savides**, 55: one of the most respected and visually daring cinematographers of his generation (*Elephant*; *Birth*; *Zodiac*).

Bruce Surtees, 74: cinematographer noted for his close collaborations with Don Siegel (*Dirty Harry*; *The Shootist*) and Clint Eastwood (*The Outlaw Josey Wales*).

Ron Taylor, 78: Australian shark expert who made numerous documentaries and did innovative underwater cinematography on various films, most famously *Jaws*.

Ric Waite, 78: Hollywood cinematographer, frequently on action films (*The Long Riders*; *48 Hrs*; *Footloose*).

COMPOSERS & MUSICIANS

Richard Rodney Bennett, 76: distinguished British composer, active in films and TV (*Far from the Madding Crowd*; *Murder on the Orient Express*; *Four Weddings and a Funeral*).


Bernardo Bonizzi, 48: composer for Almodóvar in the 1980s (*Labyrinth of Passion*; *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*).

Hal David, 91: lyricist who co-wrote the title

songs for *What's New Pussycat* and *Alfie* and 'Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head' for *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*.

Marvin Hamlisch, 68: composer-songwriter whose film work embraced such different musical styles as *The Sting*, *The Way We Were* and *The Spy Who Loved Me*.

Hayashi Hikaru, 80: Japanese composer who frequently worked with Shindo (*The Naked Island*; *Onibaba*) and Oshima (*Death by Hanging*).

 **Hans Werner Henze**, 86: German modernist composer who scored such films as *Muriel*, *Young Törless* and *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum*.

Robert Lockhart, 52: composer and arranger, occasionally on films (*The Long Day Closes*; *Cold Comfort Farm*).

Richard Robbins, 71: scored Merchant-Ivory films for over 25 years, from *The Europeans* to *The White Countess*.

Ravi Shankar, 92: legendary sitarist and composer who scored the *Apu* trilogy and Attenborough's *Gandhi*.

 **Robert B. Sherman**, 86: teamed with his brother Richard to write songs for family films (*Mary Poppins*; *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*).

ACTOR

YAMADA ISUZU

5/2/1917 – 9/7/2012


The great Japanese actress Yamada Isuzu enjoyed a long and illustrious career both on screen and stage. For Western audiences, she was most famous as Kurosawa's Lady Macbeth in *Throne of Blood* (1957, pictured). But her acting career – which stretched back to 1931, when she made her debut aged 13 – encompassed outstanding performances for many of the major directors of classical Japanese film.

In the mid-1930s she worked several times with Mizoguchi Kenji, most importantly on *Osaka Elegy* and *Sisters of the Gion* (both 1936), two bleakly brilliant accounts of female experience in pre-war Japan. In the first, she played a switchboard operator in Japan's commercial capital who becomes her boss's mistress; in the second, she was a rebellious Kyoto geisha who vaults from patron to patron for personal advantage. In both films, Yamada's searing performances gave full expression to Mizoguchi's concerns with the painful situation of Japanese women.

She made her final appearance for Mizoguchi during the war in *The Famous Sword* (1945), and was soon in competition with her former mentor. In *Actress* (1947) she starred as Matsui Sumako, a leading stage actress of the early 20th century. The film, directed by her then lover Kinugasa Teinosuke, appeared in the wake of Mizoguchi's version of the story, *The Loves of Sumako the Actress*, which had starred Tanaka Kinuyo.

In the 1950s, Yamada gave distinguished performances for a range of directors

DIRECTORS


 **Theo Angelopoulos**, 76: Greek director of epic works who was among the most respected and debated filmmakers of his generation (*The Travelling Players*; *Landscape in the Mist*; *Ulysses' Gaze*; *Eternity and a Day*).

Paul Bogart, 92: directed a handful of noteworthy features (*The Skin Game*; *Torch Song Trilogy*).

José Luis Borau, 83: award-winning Spanish director (*Furtivos*; *Leo*) who also aided other filmmakers as a producer, screenwriter and mentor.

Yash Chopra, 80: Indian filmmaker known for his glossy productions and his work with Amitabh Bachchan (*Waqt*; *Deewar*; *Chandni*).


Marilou Diaz-Abaya, 57: Filipina filmmaker best known for her 1998 film *José Rizal*.

 **Stephen Dwoskin**, 73: experimental filmmaker who explored voyeurism and the body's relationship to pain and pleasure (*Dyn Amo*; *Pain Is...*).

 **Nora Ephron**, 71: humorist and author who brought a contemporary woman's voice to romantic comedies as both screenwriter (*When Harry Met Sally...*)



including Goshō Heinosuke, Toyoda Shiro, Naruse Mikio and Ozu Yasujiro. But arguably her finest post-war work was for Kurosawa. Her glacial Lady Macbeth, with make-up and gestures inspired by Noh theatre, is one of the most extraordinary characterisations in any version of Shakespeare on film. She also acted for Kurosawa in *The Lower Depths* (1957) and *Yojimbo* (1961), both of which made full use of her harsh star persona.

From the 1960s she was increasingly active on stage and in television, and continued to act until worsening health forced her retirement in 2002. Two years before this, she had become the first actress to receive the Order of Culture from the Japanese government.  **Alexander Jacoby**

and writer-director (*Sleepless in Seattle*, *You've Got Mail*, *Julie & Julia*).

Metin Erksan, 83: filmmaker who helped bring world attention to Turkish cinema in the 1960s (*Revenge of the Snakes*, *Dry Summer*).

Jamaa Fanaka, 69: independent filmmaker known for *Penitentiary*, and an advocate for more directing opportunities for women and minorities in Hollywood.

Leonardo Favio, 74: popular Argentine actor-singer who became a prominent director (*The Romance of Aniceto and Francisca*; *Nazareno Cruz and the Wolf*).

César Fernández Ardavin, 90: Spanish filmmaker who won the Golden Bear at Berlin in 1960 for *El lazarrillo de Tormes*.

Robert Fuest, 84: director whose varied output includes an adaptation of *Wuthering Heights* and the cult horror film *The Abominable Dr. Phibes*.

Octavio Getino, 77: Argentine documentary filmmaker (*The Hour of the Furnaces*) and theorist who was a major force of the Third Cinema movement.

Ulu Grosbard, 83: theatre director who worked only occasionally in film (*Straight Time*, *True Confessions*).

Jeff Keen, 88: prolific experimental filmmaker who often drew on pop culture for inspiration (*Marvo Movie*, *Mad Love*, *Artwar*).

Roman Kroitor, 85: Canadian filmmaker of innovative documentaries (*Universe*, *In the Labyrinth*) who also helped invent the IMAX system.

Stanley A. Long, 78: England's premier sexploitation producer-director in the 1960s and 70s (*West End Jungle*, *Adventures of a Taxi Driver*).

Kurt Maetzig, 101: one of East Germany's most important directors (*Marriage in the Shadows*; *Council of the Gods*; *The Rabbit Is Me*).

Chris Marker, 91: cinematic essayist and poet who never ceased experimenting with the medium's possibilities (*La Jetée*, *Le Joli mai*; *A Grin Without a Cat*, *Sans soleil*).

Claude Miller, 70: protégé of Truffaut who ultimately established his own voice as a director (*Garde à vue*, *Class Trip*).

Robert Nelson, 81: experimental filmmaker from the San Francisco art scene (*Oh Dem Watermelons*; *Bleu Shut*).

Paulo Rocha, 77: Portuguese director, occasionally selected for Cannes (*A Ihl dos Amores*, *O Rio do Ouro*).

Jorge Ruiz, 88: documentarian considered a key figure in Bolivian cinema and in the development of South American indigenous filmmaking (*Vuelve Sebastiana*; *La Vertiente*).

Pierre Schoendoerffer, 83: chronicled the French and American wars in Vietnam as a correspondent, novelist and filmmaker (*The Anderson Platoon*; *Diên Biên Phu*).

Tony Scott, 68: specialist of breathless action blockbusters (*Top Gun*; *Unstoppable*) who also made films with cult followings (*The Hunger*; *True Romance*).

Shindo Kaneto, 100: displayed remarkable diversity in style and subject-matter in a career that spanned more than half a century (*Children of Hiroshima*; *The Naked Island*; *Onibaba*).

George C. Stoney, 96: documentary filmmaker, teacher, community activist



Tony Scott

and an influential advocate of grass-roots filmmaking (*All My Babies*; *The Uprising of '34*).

Mel Stuart, 83: his work ranged from acclaimed documentaries (*Four Days in November*, *Wattstax*) to the children's classic *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*.

Seyfi Teoman, 35: see box page 63.

Albie Thoms, 71: Australian avant-garde filmmaker and theorist (*Marinetti*, *Palm Beach*).

Wakamatsu Koji, 76: auteur of politically based Japanese 'pink film' who moved into more mainstream fare late in his career (*Violated Angels*; *United Red Army*).

EDITORS

George Bowers, 68: helped break ground for African-American film editors in Hollywood (*A League of Their Own*; *From Hell*).

Neil Travis, 75: edited the landmark TV miniseries *Roots*, and won an Oscar for *Dances with Wolves*.

PRODUCERS & STUDIO EXECUTIVES

Gerry Anderson, 83: pioneer of British TV who occasionally ventured into film production (*Thunderbirds Are Go*; *Doppelgänger*).

Hal E. Chester, 91: American teen actor who became a producer, mostly in England (*The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*; *Night of the Demon*).

Jake Eberts, 71: Canadian producer and financier who helped recharge British film by backing

Chariots of Fire, *Gandhi* and *The Killing Fields*.

Frank Godwin, 95: independent producer (*Woman in a Dressing Gown*; *Demons of the Mind*) and occasional director (*Terry on the Fence*).

John Kemeny, 87: leading Canadian producer (*The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*; *Atlantic City*; *Quest for Fire*).

Zalman King, 70: actor who became a producer (*Nine½ Weeks*) and director (*Two Moon Junction*) of erotica.

Bob Lambert, 55: long-time Disney executive credited with steering the studio from hand-drawn animation into the digital era.

Martin Poll, 89: producer (*The Lion in Winter*; *Love and Death*) who also helped kick-start New York's filmmaking boom in the 1950s.

Bingham Ray, 57: distributor and executive who was a widely admired voice for independent and international film.

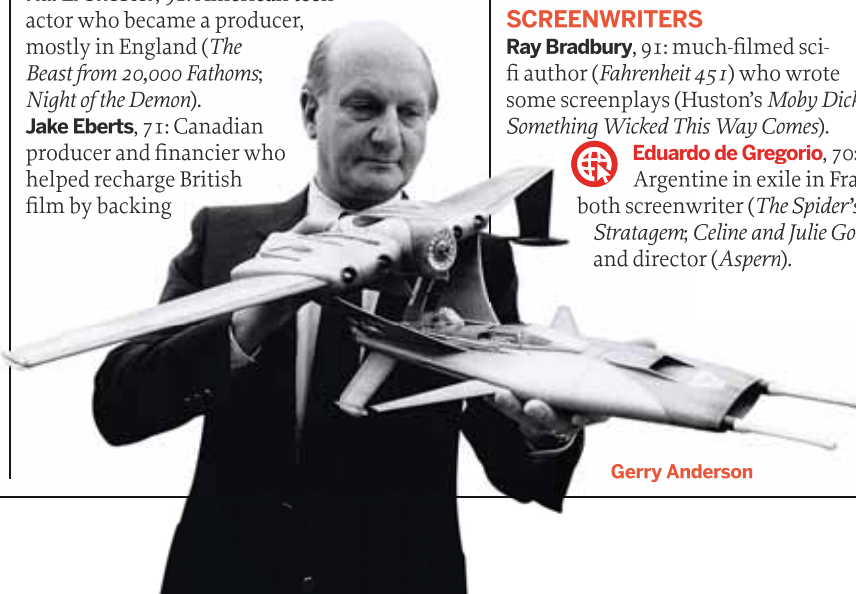
Martin Richards, 80: Broadway producer whose film efforts include *The Boys from Brazil*, *The Shining* and *Chicago*.

Richard D. Zanuck, 77: son of Darryl Zanuck, and a producer in his own right noted for his partnership with David Brown (*The Sting*; *Jaws*; *The Verdict*).

SCREENWRITERS

Ray Bradbury, 91: much-filmed sci-fi author (*Fahrenheit 451*) who wrote some screenplays (Huston's *Moby Dick*; *Something Wicked This Way Comes*).

Eduardo de Gregorio, 70: Argentine in exile in France as both screenwriter (*The Spider's Stratagem*; *Celine and Julie Go Boating*) and director (*Aspern*).



Gerry Anderson

Tonino Guerra, 92: helped shape Italy's post-neorealist period and had long collaborations with Antonioni, Fellini, Rosi and Angelopoulos, among others.

Frank Pierson, 87: writer of *Cat Ballou*, *Cool Hand Luke* and *Dog Day Afternoon*, and an elder statesman of Hollywood screenwriters.

Frederica Sagor Maas, 111: silent-era screenwriter who helped write vehicles for Garbo (*Flesh and the Devil*), Clara Bow (*The Plastic Age*) and Louise Brooks (*Rolled Stockings*) and published a Hollywood tell-all when she was 99.

Boris Strugatsky, 79: Russian science-fiction novelist who co-wrote Tarkovsky's *Stalker* with his brother Arkady, based on their novel.

Boleslaw Sulik, 83: worked in England and his native Poland as a documentary filmmaker, author and screenwriter (Skolimowski's *Deep End*; Wajda's *The Shadow Line*).

Gore Vidal, 86: author with an iconoclastic, acerbic style who wrote the occasional film script (*Suddenly*, *Last Summer*, *The Best Man*).

Eduard Volodarsky, 71: Russian screenwriter who sometimes struggled with Soviet

authorities (*At Home Among Strangers*; *Trial on the Road*; *My Friend Ivan Lapshin*).

SET & COSTUME DESIGNERS

Richard Bruno, 87: costume designer noted for his work with Scorsese and De Niro (*Raging Bull*; *Goodfellas*).

Andrea Crisanti, 75: Italian production designer who worked with Leone (*A Fistful of Dynamite*), Antonioni (*Identification of a Woman*), Tarkovsky (*Nostalgia*) and several times with Rosi.

Jean 'Moebius' Giraud, 73: French comic-book artist who was a film conceptual artist (*Alien*; *Tron*), and whose work influenced the look of numerous other films.

Ishioka Eiko, 73: versatile designer whose film work includes the production design for *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* and the costumes for *Bram Stoker's Dracula* and *The Cell*.

Stan Jolley, 86: production designer (*Walking Tall*; *Witness*) who also helped design Disneyland.

Ralph McQuarrie, 82: conceptual artist who created the initial designs for many of the

characters, sets and spaceships for the first *Star Wars* trilogy, among other films.

Ben van Os, 67: Dutch production designer, often working internationally (*The Cook the Thief His Wife & Her Lover*; *Orlando*; *Girl with a Pearl Earring*).

J. Michael Riva, 63: production designer on period dramas (*The Color Purple*), action franchise films (*Iron Man*) and, most recently, *Django Unchained*.

SOUND & SPECIAL EFFECTS

Mike Hopkins, 53: sound editor noted for his long association with Peter Jackson (*The Lord of the Rings* trilogy; 2005's *King Kong*).

Eileen Moran, 60: visual-effects producer with Weta Digital on *Avatar* and Peter Jackson's *King Kong* remake and Tolkien epics.

Carlo Rambaldi, 86: Italian special-effects artist and animatronics expert who created E.T., the creature's head for *Alien* and the aliens for *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

Matthew Yuricich, 89: one of Hollywood's leading matte artists, whose paintings enhanced 1959's *Ben Hur*, *North by Northwest*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *Blade Runner*.

DIRECTOR

SEYFI TEOMAN

16/4/1977 – 8/5/2012

It's always a tragedy to see an artist on the threshold of greatness leave the stage too early, as happened in May last year when the talented Turkish filmmaker Seyfi Teoman died after a motorcycle accident. Many were struck by the irony that a traffic accident and an untimely death were not only the subjects of two of his films, but also what brought Teoman's promising career to an end. In his first film *Summer Book* (2008), a car crash causes the cerebral haemorrhage suffered by the protagonist's father; in his most recent feature *Our Grand Despair*, which competed at Berlin in 2011, a girl loses both her parents in a traffic accident.

With its vivid portrayal of Ankara, a city whose name is synonymous with Turkish state bureaucracy, *Our Grand Despair* seems destined to be the centrepiece of his legacy. But there were other films and ventures in his short career for which he will be remembered. A graduate of the Polish National Film School in Łódź, Teoman was among a number of Turkish cinephiles who loved making films as much as seeing them. The realism and moral complexities of Krzysztof Kieslowski's films clearly influenced his short *Apartment* (2004), about two strangers living in the same building. Frequently meeting at the lift, the duo struggle to break free of their lonely lives, but seem hopelessly imprisoned in their environment.

Apartment's lead actor was Emin Alper, who last year directed the excellent *Beyond the Hill* (*Tepenin Ardı*), which Teoman produced. Indeed, *Apartment* had marked the beginning of a beautiful friendship



between Turkish cinephiles and a burgeoning film industry. Teoman was a contributor to *Altıyazı*, the Turkish film magazine founded in 2001 by a group of critics, some of whom went on to produce *Summer Book*.

Tracing a boy's life over the course of one summer in the provincial town of Silifke, *Summer Book* evidenced the emergence of an original voice in Turkish cinema, partly influenced by Nuri Bilge Ceylan's naturalism while offering a new focus in details of provincial life. *Our Grand Despair*, three years later, showed the director growing in maturity.

Teoman left behind a cinephile's legacy. He wrote about films, produced and directed them, and also encouraged others to do the same. Like Jean Vigo he lived a short but very prolific life; and as with Vigo, his talent will not be forgotten. **Kaya Genç**

MISCELLANEOUS

Bob Anderson, 89: swordmaster who choreographed the fencing on *The Princess Bride*, the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy and the original *Star Wars* films, doubling Darth Vader for the latter.

Robert Easton, 81: actor and Hollywood's premier dialect coach, whose students included Gregory Peck (*The Boys from Brazil*), Al Pacino (*Scarface*) and Forest Whitaker (*The Last King of Scotland*).

Stephen Frankfurt, 80: advertising executive who did title sequences and marketing campaigns for films (*To Kill a Mockingbird*; 1978's *Superman*; *Alien*).

Philip Jenkinson, 76: film historian, collector and presenter of film programmes for television.

John D. Lowry, 79: film restoration innovator whose Lowry Process for cleaning and repairing damaged films has been used to save countless movies.

Cornel Lucas, 92: stills photographer, beginning in the 1940s, renowned for his glamorous portraits of movie stars.

Keith Lucas, 87: director of the BFI from 1972-78.

Dale Olson, 78: publicist who represented a who's who of Hollywood, and helped convince Rock Hudson to go public with his fight against AIDS.

Andrew Sarris, 83: influential proponent of the auteur theory, whose feud with Pauline Kael was the stuff of legend.

Lois Smith, 84: one of Hollywood's top publicists with such clients as Marilyn Monroe, Robert Redford, Meryl Streep and Martin Scorsese.

Amos Vogel, 91: founder of the influential film society Cinema 16, and founding director of the New York Film Festival.

Peter Walsh, 62: passionate and inspirational film programmer, from the Birmingham Arts Lab to the Irish Film Institute.

Paul Willemsen, 68: film theorist, scholar and champion of Third Cinema, who co-authored the 'Encyclopedia of Indian Cinema'.

PREVIEW

A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

Anand Patwardhan's 'Jai Bhim Comrade' is the latest film by the social activist to explore violence and oppression in India

By Olaf Möller

In a perfect world – or even just a law-abiding one – the films of Indian director Anand Patwardhan would lose their *raison d'être* within, say, half a dozen years. The problems identified and injuries decried would be thoroughly discussed in public and the courts would see to it that justice was done and stayed done. And, after a lifetime of cinema created to precipitate change, Patwardhan could look at piles of Super-8 and 16mm reels as well as shelves full of tapes and DVDs and say that all the things shown on them were now of the past and his work of merely historical value, interesting to look at as allegories, or milestones in human development.

But the world we live in is fundamentally

different. Here's one example: earlier this year, two cinemas were attacked for showing Patwardhan's *Ram Ke Naam* (*In the Name of God*, 1992), a film about the Babri Mosque-Ram Temple conflict (which is rooted in India's colonial history – in order to divide the united nationalist front they faced, the Empire's enforcers spread the rumour that said mosque had been built deliberately at the site of an ancient Hindu temple) and how a cabal of powermongers makes money and gains influence by stoking religious tensions, almost invariably ending in massacres. The film itself is now more than 20 years old, and as great a threat as ever. When *Ram Ke Naam* was first released, the worst was yet to come: Patwardhan showed what turned out to be the build-up to an attack by Hindu extremists in 1992 that ended in the mosque's destruction and a wave of violence that left tens of thousands of dead. Many more outbreaks followed, often on a comparable scale.

Patwardhan's latest, *Jai Bhim Comrade* (2012), suggests there's no reason to expect

such violence to end soon. Here, again, events began with an act of desecration: on the night of July 10-11, 1997, a garland of worn shoes and slippers was anonymously placed on a statue of Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, the European-educated Dalit (traditionally regarded as 'untouchables') asked by Gandhi to draft the Indian Constitution. When residents of Mumbai's Ramabai Ambedkar Nagar colony gathered in protest, special reserve police force officers opened fire and killed ten; in protest, a friend of Patwardhan, the poet-singer-songwriter Vilas Ghogre, committed suicide. This act, perhaps more than those preceding it, really helped to get Patwardhan engaged. The only known moving images of Ghogre singing are found in *Hamara Shahar* (Bombay):

Patwardhan follows his stories as they unfold, keeps shooting and accumulates material until history suggests an ending



Burning injustice: 'Jai Bhim Comrade' documents the 1997 killing of ten unarmed protestors, prompting the suicide of the director's friend

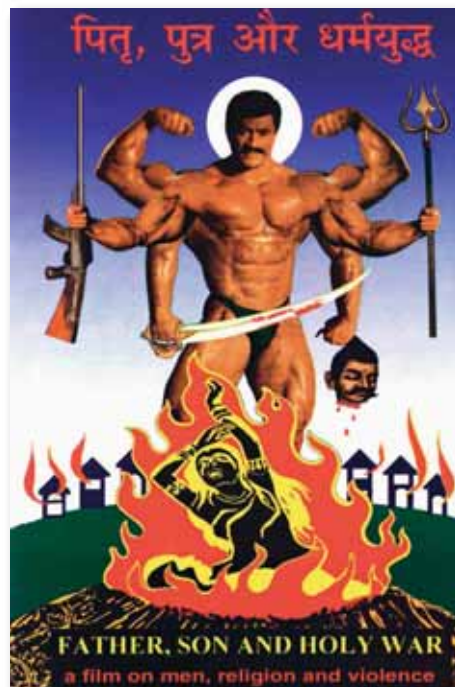
Our City, 1985), probably Patwardhan's best-known work; tape recordings are heard at several points in *Jai Bhim Comrade* too. Ghogre himself had been suffering a major existential crisis around the time of his death, having lost his political faith – getting expelled from one's party tends to do that. Alcohol hadn't helped the situation. It's telling that Patwardhan doesn't use Ghogre as the narrative's emotional centre, as someone to commiserate with; for all his uniqueness as an artist, Ghogre is most importantly a representative of his class, obviously irreplaceable as a human being yet only one link in a chain of individuals within the community who are struggling for a better life. As Patwardhan shows, others can take his place and fight on against oppression, continuing his work as he continued others'.

All of which is to suggest that Patwardhan's work is not project-based but emerges from a lifelong commitment that results every so often in a new film. It started in the 1970s, during the Emergency Years, with works that became classics of oppositional cinema, *Kraanti Ki Tarangein* (*Waves of Revolution*, 1975) and *Zameer ke Bandi* (*Prisoners of Conscience*, 1978); continued through the 1980s, with the song of the Bombay slums, *Hamara Shahar* (*Bombay Our City*, 1985) and moved through the 1990s into the third millennium with a loose series of agit-essays on religious fundamentalism, violence and the promise of India's independence not honoured by its current citizens: *Una Mitran Di Yaad Pyaari* (*In Memory of Friends*, 1991), *Ram Ke Naam*; *Pitra, Putra Aur Dharmayuddha* (*Father, Son and Holy War*, 1995); *Jung Aur Aman* (*War and Peace*, 2002) and indeed *Jai Bhim Comrade*. In between, there are a few other films, usually made in close collaboration with movements, which are tangential to the grand narrative just described.

One work begets another: once money comes in from one film, Patwardhan starts shooting the next. He's as independent as it gets, his life's work constituting a self-contained production and distribution system. Patwardhan makes his films for the locals, for use in educational work at home. Millions whose attendance is not recorded in box-office charts see his films, even know his name. Political organisations book his films and show them in rented cinemas, their own clubs or improvised open-air venues. Patwardhan often travels to attend them, answering questions and talking to people. His sound mixes and colour gradings are undertaken with settings like these in mind; when *Jai Bhim Comrade* was presented at the Viennale last autumn, Patwardhan suggested the projectionist change the volume as the mix was done for ratty sound systems rather than fancy set-ups.

(One should mention here, if only in passing, that on at least one occasion Patwardhan's work helped to get another director's film funded: John Abraham's 1987 masterpiece, *Amma Ariyan*, or *A Report to Mother*, was in part financed through screenings of *Hamara Shahar*.)

Patwardhan tends to keep his distance from subsidy bodies and commissioning editors, and from well-meaning film festivals – experience



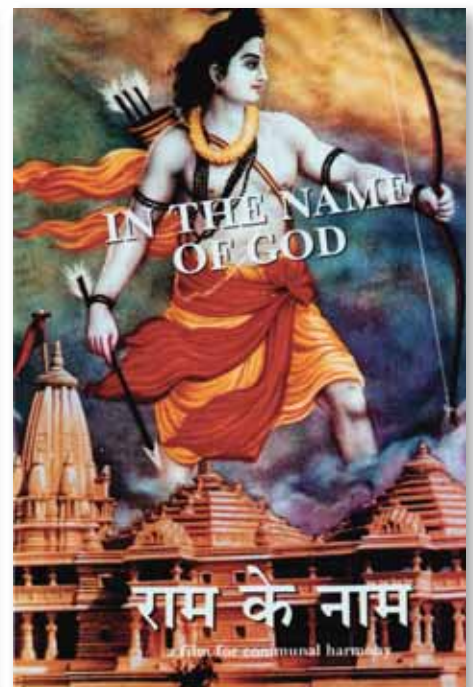
'Father, Son and Holy War'

has taught him that lately they've become rather unreliable allies. Here's another tale from the *Jai Bhim Comrade*-front: in 2011, when the three-hour film was finished, Patwardhan entered it at just about every top-list event and got rejected everywhere, usually for the same reason – length. He was often told he might still get in if he'd change his work, shorten it, make it more 'accessible': one festival suggested removing all the scenes showing Dalit folk artists performing songs and plays; another said he should keep these and take out most of the rest.

Patwardhan himself isn't averse to changing his work around when he sees the need for it. *Jung Aur Aman*, his epic on the constant tensions between India and Pakistan, was re-edited from around three hours to the version now circulating of around 135 minutes; Patwardhan apparently thought the many sidelines and sub-strands of the first version made the argument too labyrinthine. He did



Anand Patwardhan



'In the Name of God'

similar things with *Jai Bhim Comrade*, which originally ran half an hour longer. Patwardhan takes his cue from his experiences screening the films to his intended audience rather than from schedulers or programmers.

This fits the way he creates his works: Patwardhan follows his stories as they unfold, keeps shooting, talks to people, accumulates material, until history itself suggests an ending. In the case of *Jai Bhim Comrade*, that should have been a sentencing in court; when it didn't turn out the way it should have, Patwardhan continued to shoot and another ending imposed itself. A group of Dalit agit-artists found itself forced underground when the police started to refer to them as Naxalites, a label used in India to describe ultra-left wing armed insurrectionists, which they aren't. So, another voice vanishes. Where will it be resurrected? In which body? ❗

i The Anand Patwardhan season runs at BFI Southbank, London from 23-25 February



'War and Peace'

ENCOUNTERS WITH THE UNKNOWN

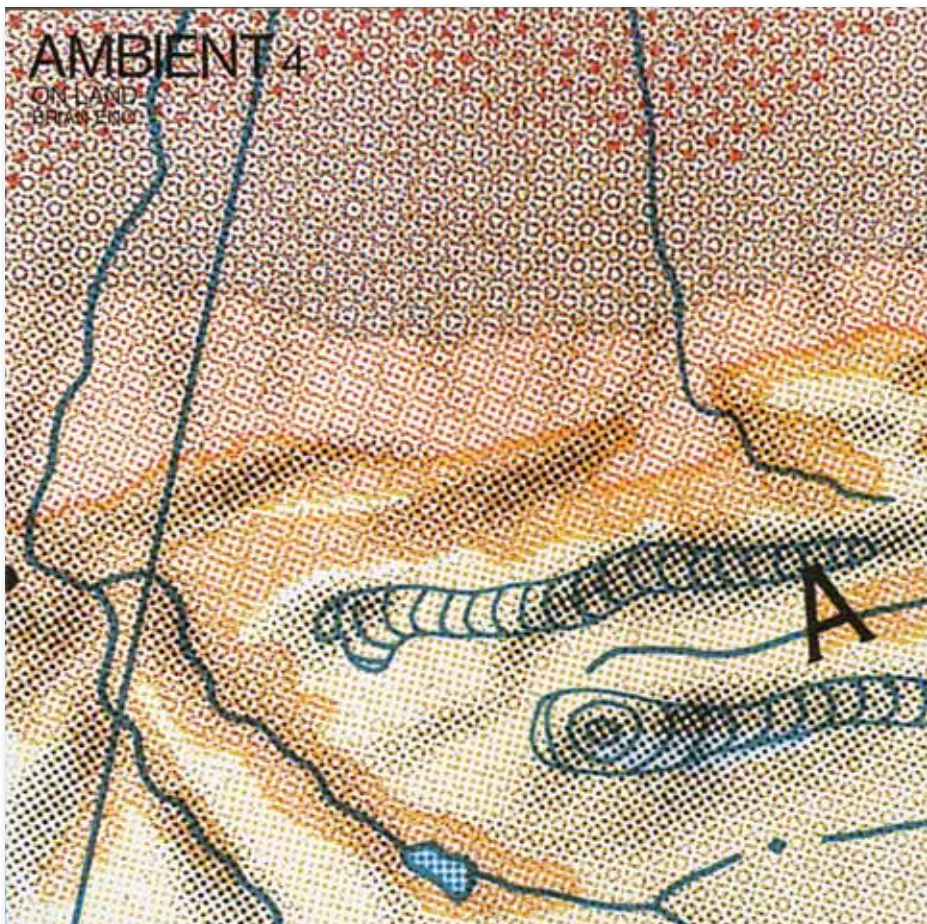
A new audio-essay draws inspiration from the Suffolk coast and various art forms in its quest to understand the 'eerie'

By Mark Fisher

The roots of *On Vanishing Land*, the audio-essay project that I co-produced with Justin Barton, lie in a walk that we took along the Suffolk coast, from Felixstowe to Woodbridge. We were supposed to be scouting locations for another project but the landscape demanded to be engaged with on its own terms. As we reflected on the sublimely desolate seaside spaces, we realised that the terrain connected M.R. James to Brian Eno: James set one of his most famous ghost stories, 'Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come To You, My Lad', in a thinly fictionalised Felixstowe while Eno's 1982 album *On Land* is full of references to Suffolk coastal territory. Much like Parkins, the scholar-protagonist of 'Whistle', James approached the Suffolk landscape as a holidaying antiquarian, on a trip from Cambridge. Eno, meanwhile, came to the terrain as a Suffolk native, reconstructing in sound the "places, times, climates and moods" of landscapes he had walked through as a child.

It soon became apparent that the affinity between James's story and Eno's music went beyond the mere fact that they were both responses to the Suffolk terrain. The deeper connection lay in an affect, a sensation that they had discovered *in* that landscape and which their work disclosed: the feeling of the eerie. Unlike other, related modes, such as the uncanny or the weird, very little has been said about the eerie. But the way that the word is customarily used – to talk about an *eerie calm* or an *eerie cry* – gives us a clue as to what is at stake in the concept. The eerie usually concerns agency: is an agent present at all, and if so, what is its nature? If a bird's cry strikes us as eerie, it is because it suggests an intentionality or an intelligence. Similarly, if a quiet space seems eerie, it might be because we must reckon with the traces of a departed agent whose purposes cannot now be fully known (hence the eerie affect triggered by the relics of Stonehenge or Easter Island) or because we suspect that we could now be being watched by an agent that has not revealed itself. In all cases, the eerie is about the encounter with the unknown. The feeling of the eerie dissipates the moment we become aware of exactly what we are faced with.

This enigmatic dimension of the eerie means that, however ominous some of its manifestations might be, it always exerts a fascination. For James, who was both a horror writer and a conservative Christian, this fascination is always fateful, as the title of another of his Suffolk stories, 'A Warning to the Curious', made clear. But the seductive seclusion of the landscape is not so easily suppressed in the BBC's adaptations of James's stories (recently reissued by the BFI), especially in Jonathan Miller's version of 'Whistle' and Lawrence Gordon Clark's version of 'Warning'.



Land of plenty: Brian Eno's album sought to reconstruct in sound the landscape of his childhood

Miller and Clark predominantly used locations in Norfolk rather than Suffolk but they capture an alien serenity proper to the eroding East Anglian coast. (The one Suffolk location that Miller used, the lost city of Dunwich, is also invoked by Eno in the *On Land* track 'Dunwich Beach, Autumn 1960'.) The way the camera lingers on what James called the "bleak and solemn" beaches and heaths makes the films something of a televisual equivalent of the genre of ambient music that Eno brought to perfection with *On Land*. "[The] landscape has ceased to be a backdrop for something else to happen in front of," Eno wrote in his sleeve notes to the album; "instead, everything that happens is a part of the landscape. There is no longer a sharp distinction between foreground and background." With its

If a space seems eerie, it might be because we must reckon with the traces of a departed agent whose purposes cannot be fully known

gentle, eddying movements, its bubblings and babblings, its sussurating suggestions of nonorganic sentience, *On Land* calls up a dreaming landscape teeming with detail.

Eno's biographer David Sheppard wrote that, for all its invocations of Eno's childhood, the atmosphere of *On Land* "was less one of sentimental yearning and more one of introverted, sensual intoxication." Certainly, *On Land* is sensually intoxicating but "introverted" seems an odd word for a record that seems so



The 'bleak and solemn' beaches of Suffolk



'Whistle and I'll Come to You'

lacking in psychological interiority. There is no doubt a sense of solitude, a withdrawal from the hubbub of banal sociality, but this emerges as a precondition for openness to the outside, where the outside designates, at one level, a radically depastoralised nature and, at the outer limits, a different, heightened encounter with the real.

Eno recounts in those same sleeve notes that part of the inspiration for *On Land* lay in his ambition to produce an “aural counterpart” to Fellini’s *Amarcord*. The shift into sound opens up the eerie. There is an intrinsically eerie dimension to acousmatic sound – sound that is detached from a visible source – and one of the most unsettling *On Land* tracks is ‘Shadow’, which features a quietly distressing whimper that could be a human voice, an animal sobbing or an aural hallucination produced by the movement of wind. This suggests the work of some malign agent, but part of what makes *On Land* remarkable is the way that it is open to the possibility of an eerie that is not containable by the horror or ghost story genres: an outside pulsing beyond the confines of the mundane that is achingly alluring even as it is disconcertingly alien. For James, the outside is always coded as hostile and demonic. When he read his ghost stories to his Cambridge audience at Christmastime, the glimpses of exteriority they offered no doubt brought a thrill to his listeners but they also came with a firm warning: venture outside this cloistered world at your peril. Yet the world that James – a Victorian figure in the twentieth century – sought to defend had in many ways already vanished, or was on the brink of vanishing. The Bath Hotel in Felixstowe where James habitually stayed, the model for the hotel in ‘Whistle’, was burned down by suffragettes in 1914.

Perhaps the most powerful example of a work of fiction that celebrates the destruction of the Victorian patriarchal milieu that James wanted to protect – one that opens up an alien, numinous dimension of the eerie at the same time – is Joan Lindsay’s *Picnic at Hanging Rock*. In *On Vanishing Land*, we contrast the sense of the eerie-oneiric that emerges in Lindsay’s novel, and its stunning film adaptation by Peter Weir, with James’s grim nightmares. Now more than ever, we need to escape to the outside, and Lindsay’s serenely eerie enigma remains a preternaturally poised account of how to vanish. ☹

i ‘On Vanishing Land’ runs at the Showroom gallery, London until 30 March



‘Picnic at Hanging Rock’

PRIMAL SCREEN THE WORLD OF SILENT CINEMA

Paris’s festival of historical film, *Toute la mémoire du monde*, presented a fine selection of restored work



By Bryony Dixon

You have to hand it to the Cinémathèque Française – to launch a new film festival in a recession with cultural budgets being slashed all over Europe and in an overcrowded international festival schedule takes some guts. This new festival of historical film, *Toute la mémoire du monde*, based in Paris between 27 November and 2 December, mounted an impressive selection of restored films from all over the world, some introduced by A-list celebrities (Martin Scorsese, Roman Polanski, Omar Sharif and more) and offered a forum for film archivists, programmers and curators to debate restoration and promotion while catering to general audiences too. There were generous offerings for silent-era enthusiasts, including the fabulous Phono-Cinéma-Théâtre, a programme of early films with sound and music developed for the 1900 Paris ‘Exposition Universelle’ and the BFI’s restoration of Hitchcock’s ‘Blackmail’ as the closing event. The nightmare of film festival economics aside, there may be a logic to establishing another annual showcase of film restorations at this time – such events will likely be the only way we can see film on film in years to come.

The festival takes its name from the 1956 short documentary essay by Alain Resnais about the mass of human knowledge held in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Long tracking shots glide through the gloom of the stacks as the commentary meditates on the notion of curatorship – the idea that only the individual’s selection of specific texts can liberate and transform knowledge from the imprisoned mass. This is no functional industrial film but rather an individualistic work; Resnais’s speculations on man’s need to compensate for the inadequacies of his memory by collecting and controlling information could even be seen as grandiose. The library here is a cipher for all of human knowledge, in much the same way the world wide web is often conceived now. But might we also think of the processes of taxonomy as essentially self-deluding? Lindsay Anderson – conceiver of the ‘Free Cinema’ tag for the contemporaneous British equivalent of the ‘Left Bank’ movement of which Resnais was a part – suggested that “there’s a great danger in making this seem more important than it is... this whole Free Cinema thing is an important footnote”, adding that the Free Cinema manifesto had been drafted “to give journalists something to write about”. But perhaps this naming process, analogous in some ways to the Bibliothèque librarians’ categorisations, though overblown, is necessary to secure attention for one’s individual viewpoint. Maybe it’s a bit British to worry too much about overselling ourselves.

To launch a film festival in a recession, as cultural budgets are slashed, takes some guts



A programme of early films from Paris in 1900

Maybe grand ideas just sound better in French. Anyway, it seems to work for Resnais’s film and for the ambitions of the new Paris festival.

Categorisation can also offer new perspectives on the limits of things that seem to loom aggressively large. Paolo Cherchi Usai’s lecture at the festival took as its starting point the eighth statement of his provocative Lindgren manifesto (based on his Ernest Lindgren Lecture of 2010): “Digital is an endangered medium, and migration its terminal disease. Digital needs to be preserved before its demise.” With the sweeping vision for which he is famous, Cherchi Usai invited us to imagine ourselves as the moving-image archivist at the end of the digital era and to project back to today, in which time billions of hours of material have already been generated and largely lost. He played a piece of ancient Roman music based on a text that is the only surviving trace of two thousand years of culture. It puts our own little death-of-film apocalypse into perspective. It flatters us that our decisions are part of a continuity containing important cultural artefacts such as those produced by the Romans, the artists of the Renaissance, Modernism. *Toute la mémoire du monde* indeed. And even if we know this is hyperbole, it’s still inspiring stuff. ☹

THE ARCHIVE REANIMATED



Crash and burn: 'Make it New John' explored the doomed relationship between the American entrepreneur John DeLorean and Belfast car workers

Artist Duncan Campbell's poetic studies of figures from recent history challenge the very notion of biographical narrative

By John Beagles

In his seminal text, *The Language of New Media*, theorist Lev Manovich asks, "how can our new abilities to store vast amounts of data, to automatically classify, index, link, search and instantly retrieve it, lead to new kinds of narrative?" The issue for Manovich is that the gigantic digital database corpus that speeds and flows beyond our ken is at its core anti-narrative; as he says, the "world appears to us as an endless and unstructured collection of images, texts and other data records". Material is omnipresent and stored but exists in a relatively inert, unfiltered state. Manovich calls the task of creating intelligible sequences from these latent clouds of digital material the "database narrative problem". The challenge for Manovich is how to reanimate this material, to create new stories and to give it all shape in "a poetics, aesthetic and ethics of the database".

Duncan Campbell is an artist well attuned to answering Manovich's call. His engagement with the 'narrative problem' has seen him immerse

himself in the archival database, creating a series of complex, self-reflexive and poetic films: *Bernadette* (2008), *Make it New John* (2009) and *Arbeit* (2011). In all these, the struggles, anxieties and tensions of trying to know the past, to capture its dynamics and to reanimate historical subjects in the present, reverberate.

The people and historical instants Campbell chooses to resurrect are always highly distinctive. In this respect, the films appear to echo writer and filmmaker Hito Steyerl's call for artists today to "unfreeze the forces congealed within the trash of history". For Steyerl, this unfreezing must focus on figures and objects that function as "fossilised nodes" in which the tensions of a historical moment have petrified. In *Bernadette*, Campbell's portrait of the Northern Irish activist Bernadette Devlin, his sifting through the media archives (the trash of history) thawed out a key aspect of the turbulent dynamics of Northern Irish politics between 1969 and 1974. Likewise, in *Make it New John*, the iconic symbol of DeLorean (the car and man) acted as a cipher for the complex, ultimately doomed relationship between American car manufacturing, incompetent nascent Thatcherite entrepreneurialism and painful consequences for Belfast factory workers. In *Arbeit*, the economist Hans Tietmeyer's role in the introduction of the Euro,

German reunification and the recent economic collapse were woven together in a complex text and meta-text. Against the background of self-serving English historical amnesia regarding Northern Ireland and the roots of the neoliberal restoration project (as David Harvey terms it), these choices are highly prescient, not least in their staging of the intersections of class, economics and nationalism.

These are films deeply indented by technological advances and their concomitant philosophical doubts. Where once filmmakers attempted to divine social forces at work through first-hand documentation (veracity and vérité), Campbell achieves the same aim through the matrix of processed material. Sitting in a studio editing, as opposed to standing and directly filming, the sequences Campbell assembles by reprocessing mediated archival material eschew any claim to objectivity. Our culture's profound sense of groundlessness, its atemporality and loss of faith in a stable, fixed perspective from which to capture the truth, course throughout the work. Campbell's selection of multiple angle shots from the news media, most notably in *Bernadette*, is a potent signifier of this. Grappling with notions of the 'truth' and the 'factual' with a suitably wry, Beckettian strain of absurdism, the artist has described the inherent folly of

Campbell's films frequently teeter on the edge of sense. It can appear that the films are suffering cognitive breakdowns

his films by referring to them as "impossible documents". More pithily, discussing *Bernadette*, he pointedly asked, "how can you represent someone's life in 38 minutes?"

This scepticism regarding film's status as a transparent, indexical document of the real undercuts Campbell's work. His films frequently teeter on the edge of legibility and sense. At times, it can appear that the films are suffering cognitive breakdowns as the familiar structure of media narratives unwind and implode. The camera lurches and stumbles in *Bernadette*, the narrator in *Arbeit* becomes increasingly unreliable, and sound is frequently severed from image in *Make it New John*. Glitches, false starts and black marks pepper these films, collectively serving to puncture any sense of documentary business as usual. The Dadaist Tristan Tzara said art was only well when it was sick; at times, Campbell's films seem very sick indeed. The sickness is contagious: watching them can be a disorientating experience that necessitates active spectatorship, with the viewer mirroring the activities of the filmmaker; you literally have to put the film back together yourself.

Campbell has spoken of his desire not to lock his works into being purely a demonstration of the subjective, partisan nature of producing history, or to leave them caught in the loop of forever italicising truth. Real people *did* lose their jobs at DeLorean and Bernadette Devlin was treated shamefully by the Westminster government. There is, as the art critic Craig Owens once remarked, an indignity in speaking for others and Campbell, mindful that such a trap is inherent in the use of the archive, has acknowledged his responsibility towards these *material* people. If there is to be an ethics of the database, as Manovich asked for, then not regarding the circulating digital traces of people in the cloud archive as free-floating signifiers, unshackled from time and place, is obviously important. Campbell's ethical commitment results in his navigating between knowing that his archive sources are 'imaginary documents' and simultaneously allowing a space for the real to break through. Perhaps the best summation

of this is the artist and writer Daniel Jewesbury's remark about *Bernadette*: "It is precisely through not understanding her, not requiring her to add up, that something can be falteringly asserted".

One key aspect of Campbell's work is the variety of modes of attention his work invites. The aesthetic and cognitive engagements asked of his viewers fluctuate as much as the formal surfaces of the films. For instance, in *Bernadette* he manages to create a structure that accommodates shifts between humour, shock, anger, melancholia, self-reflexivity and sadness. The film's modulation through and staging of these various forms of attention avoids some of the habitual patterns of 'docu-fiction' or what Alfredo Cramerotti has called aesthetic journalism. By not purging forms of attention lacking artistic pedigrees, Campbell's films suggest that it's not just mainstream media reporting that has its ingrained habits for representing reality. Art might be part of the problem too.

In 2013, Campbell will be one of the artists representing Scotland at the Venice Biennale, and he has stated the work will pay homage to and reflect on Chris Marker and Alain Resnais's essay film *Les Statues meurent aussi*, which explored the intersection between cultural imperialism and the commercialisation of African art. As with his previous works, it promises to be an engrossing exploration of archival material as a 'node' for unfreezing the past in the present. Some of the work of Campbell's contemporaries can seem locked in a nostalgic embrace, or prone to a rather self-serving polarised aesthetic model in which entertainment is uniformly bad and abstracted criticality uniformly good. Campbell's ethics, aesthetics and poetics constitute a singular kind of mongrel entity.

Recently the cultural theorist Mark Fisher has spoken about the need for writers and artists to reverse the trend for dissenting voices to desert the mainstream and to contest this space with a reinvigorated form of populism that reclaims the word from the corporate hollowiness that predominates. Campbell's films point to this possibility. The distinct tenor of Campbell's aesthetic imbues all his films with a radically entertaining, accessible and profoundly moving sensibility. The engrossing stories he creates from the database archive provoke thoughts and dreams of resistance and agency. ☺



'Bernadette'



'Arbeit'

● **George Barber's** new video installation 'The Freestone Drone' is at **Waterside Contemporary** in Bristol from 2 February – 23 March. Consisting of three video projections, Barber's piece follows a mission from the point of view of a drone – one of those unmanned aerial vehicles that have become such a feature of recent military activity. The video combines found and made footage in an uneasy, seductive montage anchored on the drone's private thoughts as it travels across time and space, and draws on the legacy of Godard and Marker in its poetic, philosophical treatment of contemporary ethical and political concerns. www.waterside-contemporary.com

● **Corin Sworn's** new film 'The Rag Papers' shows at **Chisenhale Gallery** in London from 8 February – 24 March, as part of an installation with synchronised lighting and sound. The film's narrative shifts between the perspectives of three characters, who interact with a series of objects set within carefully designed domestic interiors; in fact objects play a central role in the film, almost as characters in their own right, the *mise en scène* becoming as potent as the protagonists' actions or any suggested story. Point-of-view shots and cutaway sequences suggest the roaming nature of each character's attention and, in turn, reveal transient spaces such as hotel rooms, sorting depots and markets. www.chisenhale.org.uk



● **A Grammar of Subversion** is a film season contained within the Barbican programme 'Dancing Around Duchamp', which runs from 22 March – 3 June. The season draws in films by and interviews with the artist himself; work by and profiles of close collaborators such as John Cage, Merce Cunningham and Hans Richter; silent film; and American underground cinema of the 1950s and 1960s, including Stan VanDerBeek (above), working in the spirit of Dadaist collage and abstraction. www.barbican.org.uk

● **Peter Todd** guest curates a programme of rarely seen films that explore different locations of creativity, from the room to the garden and beyond, in the **Zilkha Auditorium** at the **Whitechapel Gallery** on 7 March. Todd, a filmmaker himself, will introduce the programme, which will include works by John Smith, Storm de Hirsch, Renate Sami and Margaret Tait, with responses by film-maker Becca Voelcker and poet and critic Sophie Mayer. www.whitechapel.org

REFLECTIONS ON STYLE

Classical Hollywood *mise en scène*, once so commonplace in popular cinema, is all too rare in the work of today's supposed masters

By Brad Stevens

Michael Curtiz's *The Egyptian* – a 1954 CinemaScope epic about an itinerant physician's brushes with pharaonic power – is unlikely to appear on anybody's top ten list. Yet, while watching Twilight Time's splendid Blu-ray, I was struck by the intelligence of Curtiz's *mise en scène*, notably during a sequence in which the physician Sinuhe (Edmund Purdom) talks to a courtesan, Nefer (Bella Darvi), with whom he has fallen in love. Nefer, seated before a mirror, applies makeup while gazing at her own reflection. Sinuhe, initially seen at frame left, walks towards Nefer, stands behind the mirror (which now partially obscures him from view), and grabs hold of it. We thus see Sinuhe embracing not Nefer, but rather a mirror in which her reflection is visible... visible, that is, to Nefer and the camera but not to Sinuhe. Curtiz here suggests two things: that Sinuhe is in love less with Nefer herself than with her 'image'; and that Sinuhe has allowed his identity to be obscured by his obsession with Nefer. This shot is constructed entirely for the camera's benefit, allowing the film's viewer to understand something not perceived by its protagonist. Indeed, the fact that Sinuhe fails to comprehend the nature of his desire is exactly Curtiz's point.

Classical Hollywood *mise en scène* can best be understood as a form of pointmaking in which various elements comprising the onscreen world are so meticulously organised that they function as a critical tool. Yet these stylistic practices, once commonplace in popular cinema, have become all too rare. One certainly finds no evidence of them in the oeuvres of such supposedly 'important' figures as Steven Soderbergh and Paul Thomas Anderson (the modern equivalents of Fred Zinnemann and Stanley Kramer), and will be far more likely to discover specific points being made through the juxtaposition of actors and decor in the films of challenging Asian and European auteurs such as Hou Hsiao-hsien and Jean-Luc Godard (see especially the middle section of *Film Socialisme*, 2010), as well as several US directors who, far from being considered classicists, are usually categorised as quirky, offbeat or cult. A model example can be found in Tim Burton's *Sleepy Hollow* (1999). Shortly after arriving in the eponymous town, Ichabod Crane (Johnny Depp) is told the story of the Headless Horseman by Baltus Van Tassel (Michael Gambon). Burton stages the scene by cutting between Crane sitting before a bookcase full of neatly arranged volumes, and Van Tassel standing next to a fireplace. This visual opposition of books and fire exactly parallels the thematic opposition between Crane's rationalism and those supernatural forces Van Tassel is referring to, the way Burton's camera remains still when focused on Crane while moving into



Mirror mirror: Edmund Purdom and Bella Darvi in Michael Curtiz's CinemaScope epic 'The Egyptian'

the flames during shots favouring Van Tassel indicating which of these worldviews will ultimately hold the greater attraction.

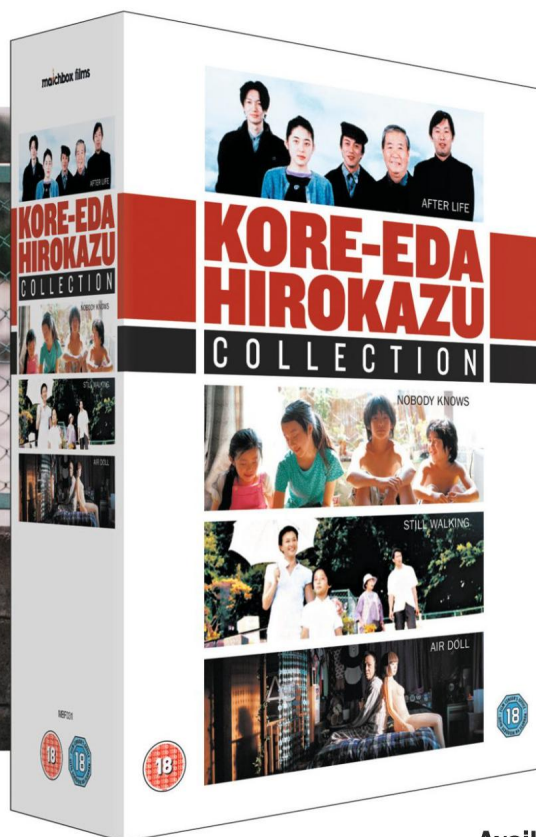
Or consider David Cronenberg's *A Dangerous Method* (2011), seemingly structured around the dispute between Sigmund Freud (Viggo Mortensen) and Carl Jung (Michael Fassbender) yet more concerned with a conflict (involving ideas familiar from Cronenberg's earlier work) between two characters who never meet: Sabina Spielrein (Keira Knightley), who insists on the need to erase distinctions between masculinity and femininity ("Only the clash of destructive forces can create something new") and Otto Gross (Vincent Cassel), whose philosophy is "never repress anything". During their discussions, Spielrein and Jung are often shown walking through exterior locations as the camera tracks ahead; when these characters sit down, they do so on a public bench, with pedestrians in the background, or on a gliding boat. Spielrein is associated with movement (our first and last glimpses of her involve moving vehicles) and windows, while Jung's debates with Gross (who is initially seen standing motionless outside the clinic) are filmed mostly in interiors by an unmoving camera carefully positioned to ensure that windows are not visible (except briefly during shots favouring Jung); the one conversation that occurs in an exterior setting shows Gross leaning against a decaying grey wall. Cronenberg's opposition of stillness and movement, stagnation and progress, suggests that the liberation desired by Gross is really a form of deathly masculine oppression, whereas that urged by Spielrein has genuinely radical implications.

The films of Martin Scorsese and Spike Lee also belong to this *mise en scène* tradition, as do those of Steven Spielberg and Clint Eastwood. Yet it is surely significant that all these directors have been active since at least the 1970s (stretching the point in the cases of Burton and Lee, who made their first shorts during that decade). North American filmmakers now enjoy greater freedom than their studio-era counterparts, yet it could be argued that

It could be argued that modern-day directorial control has led to a lack of urgency concerning what happens before the camera

directorial control has led to a lack of urgency concerning what happens before the camera. If John Ford shot only what he intended to use (sometimes holding his cap in front of the lens to indicate where he required a cut), younger directors now tend to shoot from a variety of angles, knowing their final decisions will be made in the editing room, where scenes can be patched together from footage that has, for all intents and purposes, been taken at random.

This is not an argument against rapid cutting per se. Many cinephiles fetishise lengthy takes, which they see as opposed to the increasingly fragmented editing of modern Hollywood. Yet the bravura long takes of Anderson's *Boogie Nights* (1997) and Michelangelo Frammartino's *Le quattro volte* (2010) only make sense in the context of a cinematic culture where they are the exception rather than the rule. They function as (to borrow Herbert Marcuse's phrase) 'bad utopias', deviations from an aesthetic norm that itself remains unchallenged and to which they bear an essentially parasitic relationship. The *mise en scène* practices I favour have less to do with the length of the take than with the weight of the image. One of the finest films I saw last year (inexplicably still unreleased in the UK) was Philippe Garrel's *Un été brûlant* (*A Burning Hot Summer*, 2011), which revisits themes and obsessions Garrel has been exploring since the 1960s yet seems fresher than almost anything else in modern cinema. Constantly in this work, one feels that the camera must be *here* and nowhere else in order to make the points Garrel wishes to make, the result being a contradictory mixture of inevitability and unpredictability (the image's weight being precisely what enables a new simplicity to emerge). Perhaps this is where the spirit of John Ford and Michael Curtiz now resides. 8



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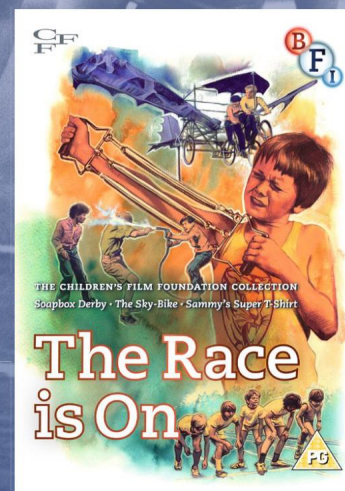
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ANATOMY OF A MURDERER

Peter Lorre's sole directorial outing *Der Verlorene* offers a fascinating counterpoint to Fritz Lang's early masterpiece *M*

By Fintan McDonagh

In the 1950s, loosened from their contractual shackles as the studio system fell apart, a variety of Hollywood stars decided that what they had always really wanted to do was direct. Some (Charles Laughton, Ida Lupino) eventually experienced great acclaim; others (Ray Milland) ended up directing B-movies for American International Pictures. Peter Lorre had to leave the US, bankrupt and addicted to morphine, before anyone would give him the chance to step behind the camera. After years in stereotyped and undemanding roles, he saw it as a chance to rescue his screen image from the sinister and snivelling, and to produce a work of filmic art that could stand alongside his starring debut, Fritz Lang's *M*.

Der Verlorene (*The Lost One*), shot in Hamburg in the winter of 1950-51, is a fascinating companion piece to *M*, the two films neatly bookending Germany's Nazi trauma. Lang's 1931 masterpiece presaged the fascist nightmare in its depiction of a state apparatus monitoring its citizens through surveillance, while the arbitrary justice meted out to Lorre's child murderer proves as chilling as the character's defence of his irresistible urge to kill. The Germany that Peter Lorre returned to five years after the war had yet to fully come to terms with the enormity of its crimes. With the 1951 Act of General Clemency attempting to rehabilitate former Nazis into society, a previously unpoliticised Lorre sensed a feeling of victimisation among the population, and recognised the need for a tale of a wartime killer to reflect the times accurately.

Lorre cast himself as Karl Neumeister, a popular doctor working in a post-war refugee camp whose wartime experiences are related in flashback following the unexpected arrival at the camp of a former colleague, Hösch. In 1943, Neumeister had been working in a research laboratory under his real name, Rothe, when he was alerted to the fact that his fiancée had been passing his work to the enemy. Unable to bear this betrayal, Rothe killed her but the crime was covered up by the state, who considered the importance of his work to be paramount. With natural justice denied and a latent desire unleashed, Rothe fought the compulsion to kill again, without success. He forged a new identity, but the arrival of Hösch underlines the inescapability of his past.

Der Verlorene resounds with echoes of *M*, even slipping in a direct homage to Lang in the shape of a *Hampelmann* children's toy. The multiple murderer succumbing to his overwhelming urge to kill should repel the audience yet in both cases Lorre manages to evoke sympathy: the younger incarnation delivers an astonishing and impassioned plea for understanding; the elder is more resigned to his fate. In both films, the killer confronts his guilt in a mirror,



The killer inside: Peter Lorre stars as a man unable to escape the evils of his past in 'Der Verlorene'

What the film has to say about German culpability during World War II proved unpalatable to its audience

the cherubic man-child replaced by the war-weary, heavy-lidded face of experience. Lorre's performances in these two registers are equally compelling. In *Der Verlorene*, his camera scans the soul of his 'lost one' in a series of penetrating close-ups, the consummate character actor finally afforded the luxury of dominance.

Despite the comparisons to Lang that his film invites, Lorre ensured that his directorial debut, which he also co-wrote, was a distinctive piece of work. Trumpeted in pre-publicity as *Lorrealismus*, Lorre's aspiration

was to "attempt to create a new realism", involving a fluid, collaborative approach to scripting and shooting through the prism of expressionism and *film noir*. The tropes of noir are plentiful – the multiple flashback structure, the pitch black shadows, the props of mirrors and cigarettes, the fatalistic undertow – and Lorre displays a knack for imbuing a scene with menace. One particularly effective sequence has Rothe murdering under cover of an air raid, an idea reprised in 1957's *Nachts, wenn der Teufel kam* (*The Devil Strikes at Night*) by Robert Siodmak, another homecoming émigré well-versed in noir.

What the film has to say about German culpability, however, proved unpalatable to its audience. At the beginning of the film, Neumeister ('new master') is the archetypal Good German, working to repair a shattered society. Once he is reminded of his murderous wartime past and is forced to confront his previous identity, he realises that his guilt can no longer be suppressed. He kills Hösch, his link to the past, before committing suicide by putting himself in the path of a train. There can be no forgetting ("Es gibt kein Vergessen"). The German public was resistant to such an accusatory message and the film signally failed to find an audience, destroying Lorre's hopes of developing a directorial career.

Despite endorsement from, among others, Lotte H. Eisner ("There is not a single slip, a single false contrast, or a single forced value"), *Der Verlorene* sank into obscurity, not receiving critical attention in America until 1983. Lorre's sole directorial effort is a remarkable film that has yet to achieve the recognition it deserves. Photogenic stars of recent years – step forward Ben Affleck and Robert Redford – have been showered with praise when they have directed themselves. Time to make room for a more individual character, as expressed in the unforgettable face and film of Peter Lorre. **S**

WHAT THE PAPERS SAID

"An extraordinary film to have been made in the depressed German film industry of the early Fifties. The film is clearly Lorre's reflection on his own reasons for leaving and staying out of Germany, just as his own superb central performance clearly sets out to place his roles as murderers in so many other movies in some sort of personal perspective... It is impossible to avoid reading the film as Lorre's homage to the work of his fellow Hollywood exile, Fritz Lang. The profusion of Langian images and motifs is such that the film in fact transcends mere homage, becoming itself both a 'commentary' on Lang's recurrent themes and a fateful meditation on the vulnerability of the individual to vast, impersonal forces."

Tony Rayns, 'MFB', March 1977

POINT OF VIEW

THE ONES THAT GOT AWAY

In the process of elevating certain British films to canonical status, we have as a culture tended to disregard other works that have not found their way so easily onto critics' polls or top-ten lists. It's time to celebrate these B movies, horror films and curios, and acknowledge their central place in our national cinema



Left on the bench: Chris Lowe and Neil Tennant in Jack Bond's Pet Shop Boys film 'It Couldn't Happen Here'

By Sam Dunn

The recent deal between StudioCanal and Network, in which 450 British films have been licensed to the British independent by the French international for DVD release, is an exciting one. It means that many long-forgotten films from the history of our national cinema will finally see the light of day again after having been shut away from view since their original theatrical release. But while it's a moment for celebration, it also raises pressing questions about cultural priorities, taste and the extent to which we value our national cinema.

There are films about which we are collectively proud (Powell and Pressburger's *The Red Shoes*, David Lean's *Brief Encounter*, Carol Reed's *The Third Man* and Ken Loach's *Kes*, for example). These are works that have thrilled, moved and entertained us. They have won prestigious prizes and universal acclaim. They have endured. Such films are important and our belief in – and enjoyment of – them is also important. But our collective fondness and enthusiasm for these chosen few preferred representatives from our vast legacy has made us complacent about, even uninterested in, the rest. We appear to have decided that other

films, especially ones we haven't heard of (as if that were any measure of quality), simply won't be able to compete, and certainly won't be worthy of our attention. Worse still, there seems to be a fear that exploring British cinema's highways and byways will throw up something that is best kept from sight; something that will irrevocably tarnish the reputation that the durable, canonised works have helped establish for Britain's cultural legacy – and which must be maintained at all costs.

British film history is vast and complex. It's impossible to either contain it or to reduce it to bite-sized chunks. But who would want to do that anyway? As a nation, whether we like it or not, we have feasted on hundreds of films that have not found a place in critics' polls and top-ten lists – B movies, horror films, curious art-meets-exploitation hybrids, police procedurals, sexploitation movies – all of which

Our fondness for a chosen few films from our vast legacy has made us complacent about, even uninterested in, the rest

are part of the history. Many will also remember the shorts and mid-length supporting features of decades gone by, but seeing them now is almost impossible. Who, for instance, can recall James Dearden's 1979 mid-length production *Diversion*? A cautionary tale about adultery, *Diversion* was remade, from a screenplay by Dearden, as *Fatal Attraction* – and then went on to fall off the edge of the cultural map.

Forgotten films like this deserve to be treated with more care and attention. They need to be brought back into circulation for new audiences to enjoy and explore. It's likely that their re-emergence will upset our understanding of our cultural past, but what could be healthier than shaking up our sense of what we thought we knew? Especially when it wasn't an adequate understanding in the first place.

But maybe there are other reasons for our reluctance to embrace the idea of re-mapping the cultural terrain. Perhaps we worry that displaying an interest in the dark recesses of British cinema history – with all its potential artlessness, pretensions and failings – might make us appear somewhat less than cultured. If we pride ourselves on being cinephiles with cosmopolitan tastes, then perhaps we

feel we must – out of necessity – look beyond what is on our own doorstep in order to engage with the artistic produce of other cultures. Of course, cinema is an international artform, and any serious interest in it must involve an engagement with films from around the world. But if we actively decide to ignore huge blocks of our cultural past in order to be recognised as having discerning tastes, then we have a serious problem.

StudioCanal owns a significant proportion of Britain's cinematic legacy, and has – to its credit – been slowly but surely releasing key parts of that legacy on DVD over recent years. In addition to its editions of well-known films from Ealing and Hammer, this has meant that such strange, wonderful and funny films as Roy Boulting's *Twisted Nerve* (1968), Seth Holt's *Nowhere to Go* (1958), Thorold Dickinson's *Secret People* (1951), Michael Truman's *Go to Blazes* (1962) and Jeremy Summers's *Crooks in Cloisters* (1963) have finally made that perilous journey back from the big screens of yesteryear to the home-entertainment monitors of today. But StudioCanal's isn't the only catalogue that contains swathes of British screen history.

The archives of all the major studios are bulging with British films that have been missing from our screens for decades. It's impossible to do justice to the scale of the situation, but a short, random selection of disappeared works from the 1960s alone might look like this: David Greene's *Sebastian* (1967), starring Susannah York, Dirk Bogarde and John Gielgud; Robert Freeman's *The Touchables* (1968), with its David and Donald Cammell script; Jack Clayton's *Our Mother's House* (1967), starring Dirk Bogarde and Pamela Franklin; Michael Powell's *The Queen's Guards* (1961), with Raymond and Daniel Massey; Jack Gold's *The Reckoning* (1969), starring Nicole Williamson and Rachel Roberts; Peter Collinson's *The Penthouse* (1967), starring Terence Morgan and Suzy Kendall.

Of course, there's much more besides. Where, for instance, did all the Teddington Studios 'quota quickies' of the 1930s and 40s go? Whatever happened to such gloriously strange 70s offerings as *What Became of Jack and Jill?* (1971) and *Girl Stroke Boy* (1971)? And, if music's your bag, you too might be wondering what hope we have of ever seeing *The Long Distance Piano Player* (1971), starring Ray Davies, again. Or Jack Bond's *Pet Shop Boys* movie *It Couldn't Happen Here* (1987).

Fortunately, there are companies out there working hard to change all of this. Network, for instance, has been dedicated to releasing both celebrated and neglected titles from Britain's screen past for more than a decade now. Thanks to its endeavours, we can now see such extraordinary and varied TV works as David Leland's *Tales out of School* quartet (1982-3) and Anthony Newley's *The Strange World of Gurney Slade* (1960), as well as such little-known genre film gems as Sidney Hayers's typically gritty *Assault* (1970) and *Revenge* (1971), and the quirky Michael Bentine vehicle *The Sandwich Man* (1966), directed by Robert Hartford-Davis.

The British DVD label Odeon Entertainment



(OEG) has a much smaller catalogue than Network, but it too has been focused in its determination to release a great many relatively obscure British films on DVD, including films directed by such important figures as Charles Frend (*Girl on Approval*, 1960), John Gilling (*Panic*, 1963), Don Sharp (*The Violent Enemy*, 1969), Ronald Neame (*Golden Salamander*, 1949) and Charles Crichton (*The Third Secret*, 1964).

A newer label for which those interested in British cinema history can be grateful is Strawberry Media, a company that has been ensuring that brilliant yet neglected films by the likes of Basil Dearden (*Sapphire*, 1959; *The Violent Playground*, 1958), Michael Powell (*The Spy in Black*, 1939) and Terence Fisher (*So Long at the Fair*, 1950) are at last getting their UK DVD premiere releases. And there's Renown, too, which has been making such wonderful films as Jim O'Connell's *Smokescreen* (1964), Sidney J. Furie's *The Boys* (1962), Edmond T. Gréville's *Noose* (1948) and many other essential British Bs accessible once again.

Despite the efforts of these labels, though, there is much work to be done before adequate access is provided to the British film riches



Food for thought: 'The Sandwich Man'

that continue to remain out of circulation – especially when it comes to works that are, by their very nature, more obscure than those directed by, or starring, big names: amateur film productions, documentaries, dramatic shorts, experimental works etc. Michael J. Ham's beautiful, understated *Her Village Summer* (1963), Elizabeth Sussex's *Can Horses Sing?* (1971) – which, by the way, is an absolute must for fans of *Sleep Furiously* – and David Gladwell's *28b Camden Street* (1965) barely register as footnotes in the history of British cinema, but they are extraordinary works and deserve an audience. To cite just three examples is, of course, to do no justice whatsoever to the sheer volume of 'lost' works. But then this isn't just about making lists – it's about exploring how we feel about British cinema.

And as we consider how we feel, it's worth looking to other territories to gauge their interest in British film. In doing so we find that Jack Clayton's wonderful *Our Mother's House* (1967) is available in a Spanish DVD edition but not on UK DVD. Nicolas Roeg's 1986 *Castaway* (English audio track apparently included) has turned up in Germany, but is still missing from our shores. And in America we find the likes of Peter Glenville's Bafta-nominated *Term of Trial* (1962) – with its enviable cast of screen greats Simone Signoret, Laurence Olivier, Sarah Miles and Terence Stamp – Desmond Davis's *I Was Happy Here* (1965), Ken Russell's *Savage Messiah* (1972), Jack Cardiff's *Dark of the Sun* (1967), Alan Gibson's *Crescendo* (1969) and J. Lee Thompson's *Eye of the Devil* (1966) rubbing shoulders with the countless other British titles which are finally being given a platform on the various burn-on-demand 'archive' labels from the studios.

Is there really no market for these titles in the UK? Isn't anybody here interested? ☹

READERS' LETTERS

Letters are welcome, and should be addressed to the Editor at Sight & Sound, BFI, 21 Stephen Street, London W1T 1LN
Fax: 020 7436 2327 Email: S&S@bfi.org.uk

OBSERVATIONS ON NEO-NOIR

In Nick James's excellent neo-noir article (Deep Focus, S&S, February) he got a small technical detail wrong. Michael Mann's *Collateral* was not shot on the Red camera, as he writes. In fact that camera was only released in 2007. The film was a mix of Thomson's Viper, Sony's F900 and 35mm film (for the interiors).

Max Jacoby, by email

Nick James, in his interesting overview of 21st-century films influenced by *film noir*, may be right to observe that David Cronenberg's *A History of Violence* "mimics the 1947 noir classic *Out of the Past*". To my mind, however, Cronenberg's movie more resembles – in theme, at least – Anthony Mann's western *Man of the West* (1958). Both films present personal histories in which the protagonists, having deliberately attempted to blank out their past criminal histories, are compelled to re-enter that past, effectively making an enforced descent into hell in order to achieve psychic reintegration.

John Owston, Southall

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

While I generally side with the view of Michael Atkinson in his bracing critique of Kathryn Bigelow's supposedly "pure procedural" *Zero Dark Thirty* as a "political" war film ('Duty Calls', S&S, February), I must take issue with his sweeping statement, "No one would argue that bin Laden should have been spared the full brunt of the violence he helped to initiate." No one? We may be in a woolly, unfashionable minority, but there are still those who believe that bin Laden should have been captured and tried according to international law.

Andrew Collins, film editor, 'Radio Times', London

THE IMITATION GAME

I recall Orson Welles saying something along the lines that his best advice for a first-time director is never to have seen a movie before. Glib perhaps, but am I alone in growing weary of Quentin Tarantino's – and many other directors' – all-consuming pastiche approach to filmmaking ('Trail Blazer', S&S, February)?

There aren't enough years in his lifetime for Tarantino to individually pay homage to every film we get a nod and a wink to, so as many as possible go into the blender. Musical styles, cinematic tics – the lot. The richest ingredients do not always make the best cake. Though he's a man of obvious talent, one would dearly love to have him make a film off his own bat – and *Reservoir Dogs* is the nearest we have.

Blaxploitation, nuns, Nazis, zombies, vampires... do they all need to go into one movie? Rather than an orgy of popular culture, why not settle down to Giulio Questi's *Django Kill*? Sometimes the simplest relationships can be the most satisfying.

K. Thompson, London

LETTER OF THE MONTH THE NEW WAVE OF HOMOPHOBIA



Sad to think that a filmmaker as gifted as René Clément (Home Cinema, S&S, February) was marginalised by his near-contemporaries in the New Wave. I do wonder how much of that was about his films, and how much was simple old-fashioned homophobia? For all their stated admiration for Jean Cocteau, the New Wave directors were very much a macho boys' club. The bisexual Jacques Demy and his wife Agnès Varda were never really part of

the gang. Gay directors of earlier generations (Marcel Carné, Marc Allégret and the most brilliant of all, Marcel L'Herbier) were routinely dismissed in the most ugly and narrow-minded of ways. It can't have helped that a Clément film such as 'Knave of Hearts' (pictured, 1954) anticipated most of the 'inventions' of the New Wave years before Godard and his 'Cahiers du cinéma' pals even picked up a camera! David Melville, University of Edinburgh

BEGGARS AND CHOOSERS

We are grateful for Neil Brand's reassessment of William Wellman's *Beggars of Life* (Lost and Found, S&S, January), and for his acknowledgement of George Eastman House's role in rescuing this masterpiece. He fails to mention, however, that the museum restored the film to its original 35mm format. It is available in an archival 35mm print, a much better element than the Digibeta copy. We are puzzled by the fact that the Digibeta version is being preferred by venues properly equipped to show silent films in their original medium.

Caroline Yeager, assistant curator, Motion Picture Department, George Eastman House

THE DEATH OF ANALOGUE

While catching up on unread journals, I came across your fascinating piece concerning the film elements of Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* ('The Maid Remade', S&S, December 2012). The story itself is testament to an epoch of film curatorship that in one sense is only just beginning: the electronic expropriation of cinema's analogue past by HD and DI. Nick Wrigley's articles in the same issue on the death of film grain on Blu-ray (Forum) and the mixed results of Hitchcock reissues (Home Cinema) only highlighted this new dawn

– something Paolo Cherchi Usai described ten years ago as "a new digital Dark Age".

Consequently, Mark Cousins's analysis of facial close-ups ('The Face of Another', S&S, December) was all the more affecting. How is the cinematic representation of portraiture changed? I cannot have been the only one to notice that Cousins's example of reverse close-up in Godard's *Vivre sa vie* makes no reference to a later scene in the film where Anna Karina is filmed in portrait close-up weeping while in a cinema watching Falconetti in *The Passion of Joan of Arc*. Maybe Cousins thought it too obvious to mention? If he did I can understand why, because in the context of the article the scene is an almost unbearable counterpoint to the passing of analogue and photochemical cinema.

Tim Young, Darlington

Additions and corrections

February 2013 p.82 *Bullhead*, Cert 15, 129m 55, 11,617 ft +8 frames; p.90 *Django Unchained*, Cert 18, 165m 11s, 14,866 ft +8 frames; Production Sound Mixer: Mark Ulano; p.91 *Do Elephants Pray?*, Cert 15, 107m 55, 9,712 ft +8 frames; p.92 *Everyday*, Cert 15, 90m 4s, 8,106 ft +0 frames; p.96 *I Give It a Year*, Cert 15, 97m 19s, 8,758 ft +8 frames; p.98 *I Wish*, Cert PG, 128m 27s, 11,560 ft +8 frames; p.99 *Jiro Dreams of Sushi*, Cert U, 82m 22s, 7,413 ft +0 frames; p.100 *The Liability*, Not submitted for theatrical classification, Video certificate: 15, Running time: 114m 55s; p.104 *Les Misérables*, 14,203 ft +8 frames; p.110 *Wreck-It Ralph*, Cert PG, 107m 40s, 9,690 ft +0 frames; p.86 *Zero Dark Thirty*, 14,128 ft +8 frames. The actor pictured on p.87 is not Mark Duplass but Kyle Chandler

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Geoff Andrew, *TIME OUT*

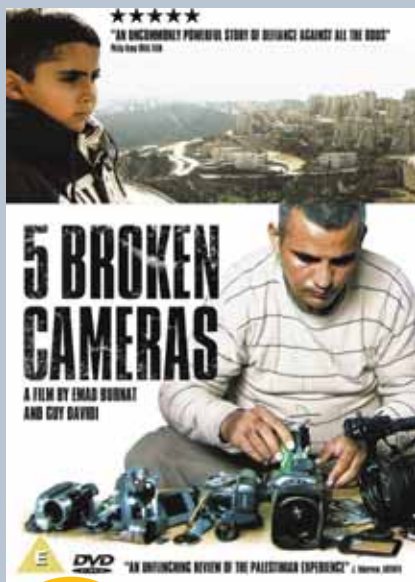
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new wave films on DVD



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Emad Burnat and Guy Davidi
Winner of audience prizes at festivals around the world, and long-listed for an Oscar, *5 Broken Cameras* is the story of one West Bank Palestinian village's resistance to occupation and land-grabs for neighbouring Israeli settlements, but told via the footage of Emad Burnat who originally bought a camera to document the early years of his son. A daring amalgam of the personal and political.

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Peter Bradshaw
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Philip French, The Observer

★★★★★
'Could scarcely be more real or more wrenching.'
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Elena

Andrei Zvyagintsev

This, the third film from the director of *The Return*, won the Certain Regard Special Jury Prize in Cannes, and Nadezhda Markina as *Elena* has also won several Best Actress awards for her performance. Elena and Vladimir are unequal partners in their 2nd marriage, he rich, she a former nurse. When Vladimir has a heart-attack, Elena realises she must act to safeguard the future of her family.

★★★★★
'The subtlety and stealth of this movie is a marvel... superbly shot and directed... deeply satisfying'

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The Guardian

★★★★★
'A sensational Russian drama... has the taut dramatic structure of a Dostoevsky parable.'

Tim Robey
The Daily Telegraph

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Reviews



95 For Ellen

Paul Dano is literally never off-screen, and more scenes than not show him alone, communing with his mobile, playing air guitar or just looking woebegone. As a portrait of an overgrown boy, deeply solipsistic and emotionally clueless, it's spot-on.



80 Films of the month



88 Films



112 Home Cinema



122 Books



We'll meet again: Tom Hanks, Halle Berry

Cloud Atlas

Germany/USA/People's Republic of China/
Hong Kong/Republic of Singapore/
United Kingdom/Spain 2012

Director: Lana Wachowski, Andy Wachowski,
Tom Tykwer

Certificate 15 171m 37s

Reviewed by Anton Bitel

David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* (2004), with its elaborate Chinese-box arrangement of six interpolated narratives fanning out from the book's centre, is one of those novels that might naturally be described as 'unfilmable'. Of course, such a label is as much challenge as deterrent to filmmakers, and it could now equally be claimed that in adapting Mitchell's book for the big screen, writer-directors Lana and Andy Wachowski and Tom Tykwer have crafted a film whose decidedly cinematic syntax of crosscutting, montage and graphic matches makes the finished product – a feverish interweaving of multiple storylines in various genres – seem conversely 'unnovelisable'. If anything, the film's structure is even more complex than the book's, with the six narrative

strands cut up and reordered in such a way that they appear to be unfolding simultaneously across gulfs of time and space, while pursuing a filmic grammar that is surprisingly easy to 'read' (but will certainly repay revisits).

If *Cloud Atlas* opens with old, scarred Zachry (Tom Hanks) telling yarns under a starry sky, dressed atavistically like an ancient goatherd and speaking in a primitive-sounding patois, this is in fact the film's chronological endpoint (and, confusingly, the source novel's midpoint), set in some far-off, off-world, 24th-century future – although it might just as well be a scene from early in the Book of Genesis, at the beginning of all humanity. An exile trying to make a new start, Zachry cuts a post-apocalyptic, postlapsarian figure in a film that comes with many a Fall of Man or Woman (from windows, off bridges, down mountains) –

The book's narrative strands are cut up and reordered in such a way that they appear to be unfolding simultaneously across gulfs of time and space

and Zachry's framing tale of his younger, Earth-bound adventures will involve, significantly, a demonic tempter in the guise of Old Georgie (Hugo Weaving). This smooth-tongued, serpentine Satan may just be a projection of Zachry's conflicted psychology, but he is also legion, with Weaving appearing as a different figure of menace in every section of *Cloud Atlas*, much as he played an ever-replicating number of Smiths in the Wachowskis' *Matrix* trilogy (which is, along with *Soylent Green*, *Akira* and the New Testament, referenced and refashioned in *Cloud Atlas*'s dystopian Neo Seoul section).

Not that Weaving is alone in his cross-character devilry; for, with almost all the film's main players taking on multiple roles across the different narratives, Hanks can be variously Zachry young and old, a diabolical doctor, a predatory hotelier, a noble physicist, an Irish gangster/author, and even (reflexively) a film actor, while other cast members get to transcend (through makeup) the boundaries of race and gender (the latter no doubt of special interest to Lana née Laurence Wachowski). Weaving, for example, hams it up in the 2012-set strand as a Nurse Ratched figure, whereas Doona Bae plays not only a racist slaver's Caucasian daughter and a 'wetback'

labourer, but also, in the Neo Seoul section, multiple versions of a cloned 'fabricant' (more reflexivity). Such radical cross-casting befits a film that, like the 'Cloud Atlas Sextet' which gives it its title (composed by Ben Whishaw's character Robert Frobisher), comprises six mutating variations on a single theme.

"There are," as Frobisher says of his musical composition in yet another of the film's self-conscious flourishes, "whole movements of the 'Atlas' that I wrote imagining us meeting again and again in different times." And so actors reappear and re-encounter themselves in different guises across the film's chronological sweep, ringing the narrative changes, just as certain motifs – cannibalism metaphorical and literal, forbidden relationships, transgressed conventions, ramifying moral choices, oppressive conservatism, revolutionary self-sacrifice, the revelations and transmissions of suppressed truth – are made both to recur and to shift from one section to the next. Meanwhile a striking comet-shaped birthmark shared by six protagonists who are otherwise separated by time, unrelated by blood and each played by a different actor, suggests a motif of metempsychosis which is made explicit in the 1970s-set story (where past lives and Carlos Castaneda are duly namechecked) and is matched by the evolving, reincarnating forms of the film's stories. Little wonder that Tom Tykwer, who first broke out with the narrative variegation of *Run Lola Run* (1998), was drawn to Mitchell's novel.

In addition to their strong family resemblance through shared casting and theme, the stories of *Cloud Atlas* also form a genealogical chain of tradition and influence, culminating in Zachry's fireside tale of "ancestors howlin' at you, yibberin' stories, all voices tied up into one". The 1849 seafaring diaries of Adam Ewing (Jim Sturgess) which constitute the first story are then read in 1936 by Frobisher near Edinburgh (Zedelgheim in the novel) as he conceives his musical sextet; in 1973, after a chance encounter with Frobisher's one-time lover Rufus Sixsmith (James D'Arcy), journalist Luisa Rey (Halle Berry) reads Frobisher's love letters and listens to his 'Cloud Atlas' symphony as she investigates an industrial cover-up; in 2012, craven publisher Timothy Cavendish (Jim Broadbent) reads a manuscript of Rey's first mystery as he rides the train to a future that forks between premature old age and renewed youthful romance; in 2144, after illicitly viewing the film version of Cavendish's 'ghastly ordeal' (and small-scale rebellion) at a care home, cloned waitress Sonmi-451 (Bae) is animated to lead a revolution against the prevailing corporocracy; 106 winters after the apocalyptic Fall, Zachry and his fellow tribesmen idolise Sonmi as their divine messiah, regarding her recorded revelations as holy scriptures.

In this game of diegetic pass-the-parcel, it is not merely characters' transformative decisions and deeds but also the communication of these down the ages which ensures that, for all the types of human devilry on display here, there is always a slender lineage of defiant resistance to furnish the requisite counterforce. Luisa wonders "why we keep making the same mistakes over and over" – yet her own actions, inspired in part by the dissident examples of previous generations, help to expose corporate



Jim Broadbent, Ben Whishaw

wrongdoing and avert ecological catastrophe. This of course does not forestall further environmental disasters down the line (2144's Neo Seoul is built over a city buried beneath rising waters, and the subsequent 'Fall' has led to the poisoning of the entire planet), which is in part why the film can just about get away with its decidedly mawkish, upbeat ending. For the circular pattern established by these cascading stories is that while love, freedom and truth may occasionally spring up against all odds, Old Georgie, that embodiment of humanity's more rapacious instincts, always comes back round again in one form or another.

Inclined to bombast and generic posturing, the stories here don't amount to much on their own – but taken together they add up



Hugo Weaving

to a richer, more resonant experience, mediated through Alexander Berner's masterfully dizzy editing and choreographed to a multi-themed score by Tykwer, Reinhold Heil and Johnny Klimek which, not unlike Frobisher's own 'Cloud Atlas Sextet', modulates the film's emotional tone through repetition and variation. While some may criticise *Cloud Atlas* for its moments of undeniable triteness, few could fault Germany's most expensive film for its sweeping ambition and narrative boldness. It is a folly, perhaps, but also a marvel of adaptation, blithely happy, like Cavendish, to do away with any conventional "disdain for flashbacks and flashforwards and all such tricky gimmicks" to tell its "tale of madness" with compelling method. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Principal Photography
Directed by
1849, 2144 and
2321 Sequences
The Wachowskis
[i.e. Lana Wachowski,
Andy Wachowski]
1936, 1973 and
2012 Sequences
Tom Tykwer
Produced by
Grant Hill
Stefan Arndt
Lana Wachowski
Tom Tykwer
Andy Wachowski
Written for the Screen by
Lana Wachowski
Tom Tykwer
Andy Wachowski
Based upon the novel
by David Mitchell
Directors of Photography
John Toll
Frank Griebel
Editor
Alexander Berner
Production Designer
Uli Hanisch

Hugh Bateup
MUSIC
Tom Tykwer
Johnny Klimek
Reinhold Heil
Supervising Sound Editor
Frank Kruse
Costume Designers
Kym Barrett
Pierre-Yves Gayraud
Visual Effects
Method Studios
Los Angeles,
Vancouver, London
ILM
Rise FX
Scanline VFX
Black Mountain
One Of Us
Trixter
Lola VFX
Bluebolt
Exozet Effects
Arri Digital Film
Gradient Effects
Stunt Co-ordinator
Volkhart Buff

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Anarchos production
In association with
A Company and
ARD Degeto
Produced in
association with
Dreams of Dragon
Pictures, Media Asia
Film Production
Limited, Ascension
Pictures Limited
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Medienboard
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Medien Stiftung NRW,
MDM Mitteldeutsche
Medienförderung,
FFF Bayern, Der
Beauftragte Der
Bundesregierung für
Kultur und Medien

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Scotland, Creative
Scotland Alba/
Chruthachail, Mallorca
Film Commission
Executive Producers
Philip Lee
Uwe Schott
Wilson Qiu

Cast
Tom Hanks
Dr Henry Goose/
hotel manager/
Isaac Sachs/
Dermot Hoggins/
Cavendish lookalike
actor/Zachry
Halle Berry
native woman/
Jocasta Ayrs/Luisa
Rey/Indian party
guest/Ovid/Meronym
Jim Broadbent
Captain Molyneux/
Vyvyan Ayrs/Timothy
Cavendish/Korean
musician/Prescient 2
Hugo Weaving

Haskell Moore/
Tadeusz Kesselring/
Bill Smoke/Nurse
Noakes/Boardman
Mephi/Old Georgie
Jim Sturgess
Adam Ewing/poor
hotel guest/Megan's
dad/highlander/
Hae-Joo Chang/
Adam, Zachry's
brother-in-law
Doona Bae
Tilda/Megan's
mom/Mexican
woman/Sonmi-451/
Sonmi-351/Sonmi
prostitute
Ben Whishaw
cabin boy/Robert
Frobisher/store clerk/
Georgette/tribesman
Keith David Kupaka/
Joe Napier/An-Kor
Apis/Prescient
James D'Arcy
young Rufus
Sixsmith/Old Rufus
Sixsmith/Nurse
James/archivist
Xun Zhou
Talbot, hotel

manager/
Yoona-939/Rose
David Gyasi
Autua/Lester Rey
Duophysite
Susan Sarandon
Madame Horrox/
older Ursula/Yusuf
Suleiman/abbess
Hugh Grant
Rev. Giles Horrox/
hotel heavy/Lloyd
Hooks/Denholme
Cavendish/Seer
Rhee/Kona chief

**Dolby Digital/
Datasat/SDDS
In Colour**
[2.35:1]

Distributor
Warner Bros
Distributors (UK)

15,445ft +8 frames

The South Pacific, 1849. Sailing home to California after securing his father-in-law a plantation contract, diarist Adam Ewing helps stowaway slave Autua. In turn, Autua saves Ewing from treacherous poisoner Dr Henry Goose. Back in San Francisco, Ewing burns the contract and, with his wife Tilda, joins the abolitionists.

Edinburgh, 1936. Disinherited Robert Frobisher writes to his lover Rufus Sixsmith of his new job assisting composer Vyvyan Ayrs. When Ayrs tries to plagiarise Frobisher's own masterpiece, the 'Cloud Atlas Sextet', Frobisher flees and eventually shoots himself.

San Francisco, 1973. Hitman Bill Smoke murders scientists Sixsmith and Isaac Sachs for helping journalist Luisa Rey to investigate a potentially catastrophic cover-up at the Swanekke Island nuclear power plant. Aided by Swanekke's head of security Joe Napier (who was once saved by her father), Rey outmanoeuvres Smoke and exposes the cover-up.

England, 2012. On the run from an imprisoned author's brothers, 65-year-old publisher Timothy

Cavendish discovers that the 'hotel' where his own vengeful brother has sent him to hide is in fact an old people's home. Cavendish breaks out with three others and, reunited with his childhood sweetheart, writes his memoirs.

Neo Seoul, 2144. Prior to her execution, cloned 'fabricant' servant Sonmi-451 recounts to an archivist how, having been rescued by resistance fighter Hae-Joo Chang, she came to broadcast her revolutionary 'Revelations'.

Big Island, 106 winters after the Fall. Valley tribesman Zachry reluctantly guides Meronym, a member of the technologically advanced 'Prescients', through cannibal territory to a taboo mountaintop to transmit a rescue appeal to off-world colonies. Meronym reveals that the tribesmen's goddess Sonmi was a human revolutionary, and helps Zachry fend off a cannibal attack. Decades later, Zachry, now married to Meronym and living off-planet, tells his grandchildren stories.

Compliance

USA 2012

Director: Craig Zobel

Reviewed by Hannah McGill

"What did they put in that chicken that made everybody lose their fucking minds?" is the dry query of one of the real police officers who finally arrive at the close of Craig Zobel's troubling psychological thriller, which draws on real events triggered by hoax calls made to fast-food joints across America over a recent decade. Audience members may respond similarly. As can so often be the case, real life here supplies extremes of human behaviour that might well be thrown out of a fiction-film script meeting for lacking credibility. No one would be dumbly obedient enough to follow bizarre orders from an unknown caller just because he called himself a police officer. No victim would passively submit to such an unseen authority. And neither patsy nor victim, surely, would allow the process to become seriously physically and sexually abusive. Except that they did, numerous times, and with variably prolonged and extreme consequences. One of the most extreme cases, at a McDonald's in Mount Washington, Kentucky, in 2004, resulted in two arrests as well as a suit against the chain, and provides much of the basis for Zobel's script. (The film, however, offers the comforting inference that the caller we see on screen will be brought to justice; the man tried for the Mount Washington incident got off, despite substantial evidence of his guilt. He remains a suspect in similar cases.)

Zobel's film and the events that inspired it draw to mind psychological experiments such as Dr Stanley Milgram's 1961 electric-shock test and Philip Zimbardo's 1971 Stanford prison experiment. The extreme results of both studies provide oft-cited evidence of hardwired negative traits in human beings: slavish collusion with authority in the former case; readily provoked sadism in the latter; swift jettisoning of compassion and moral responsibility in both. But *Compliance* resists simply wallowing in our collective vileness, and mercifully avoids that pat movie cliché of implying audience complicity in voyeurism and abuse (unlike Oliver Hirschbiegel's 2001 take on the Stanford debacle, *Das Experiment*, and its 2010 Hollywood remake). Through nuanced performances and a thoughtful script, Zobel asks us to recognise subtle reasons for each character to behave the way he or she does, and demands that we acknowledge the ambiguous responsibility for what is effectively a rape by proxy.

In cases of crimes committed by two or more people, juries are often asked to take into account the ability of one individual to manipulate others. What responsibility did Charles Manson's 'Family' of acolytes bear for their individual participation in the crimes into which he pushed them? More than him? Less? The same? Was Myra Hindley less guilty of torture, rape and murder on the basis that she adored Ian Brady and was within his control? The stunts performed by stage and television tricksters of the Derren Brown stripe make entertainment out of the same worrying questions: suggestion, manipulation



Not having a nice day: Dreama Walker

and hypnosis are used to convince ordinary people to attempt robberies and assassinations.

The caller in *Compliance* relies on his ability to talk people round by using a combination of deception, flattery and intimidation. We first glimpse him shouting into a payphone,



Bill Camp

presumably concluding his previous project. He then heads home and tries his routine on the staff of an Ohio ChickWich restaurant: asks for the manager; claims to be a police officer and to have her superior "on the other line"; then offers a vague physical description of a young female employee, to which she generously affixes a name. He tells Sandra (Ann Dowd) that 19-year-old Becky (Dreama Walker) is suspected of stealing money from a customer, and must be searched: first a scan of her belongings, then a strip-search.

Initially, the caller gets lucky, on his terms. Sandra, though hesitant, is already ratty because of an expensive employee mistake; we see that she's a bit of a jobsworth, a bit fond of martyrdom, and resentful of the perky, popular Becky, whom she's overheard mocking her frumpiness. The hoaxer's officious tone, and his dark hints of an important case in which



Ann Dowd, Drea Walker

knows he's doing wrong, but proceeds anyway. Told to spank Becky, he asks the caller if he should place the phone on her back so he can hear; the caller reacts with covert startled glee.

Whether Van believes that the caller is a cop is left open. So too is whether the caller's main kick is sexual or related primarily to how far he can make these individuals go. Clearly his undertaking involves an element of class-based exploitation: the film makes a point of showing us that he is more affluent than the average employee of ChickWich. But it also makes a symbol of the unwholesome lowest-common-denominator bilge pumped into American bellies by the junk-food industry, and the phoney can-I-help-you cheer with which it's purveyed. Can a society that voluntarily feeds itself like this have discernment in other matters? Zobel is generally respectful in his depiction of Becky's ordeal, but he does allow himself a darkly dirty joke when Van pushes

Real life here supplies extremes of human behaviour that might well be thrown out of a fiction-film script meeting for lacking credibility

the girl into oral sex: the camera cuts away to an unclean, dripping drinking straw.

Another bitter laugh, another incredulous thrill for the hoaxer, comes when he asks Van to describe the girl's pubic hair. Van notes that it's "trimmed", whereupon Becky, even as she bends naked to be inspected, feels the need to correct that "it's shaved – it's just been a couple days". It's a mean joke, but it says something about the generation of girls of which Becky is part: beset by boyfriends demanding explicit phone pictures, preoccupied with physical perfection. One of the film's most troubling lines comes at its close, when we hear Becky being interviewed by the police. Asked why she didn't "just say no", she answers that she "just knew it was going to happen". Knew what was going to happen? That she would be falsely accused? That her employer would betray her? That she would endure some sort of sexual abuse one day? To Becky, crucially – and to her work colleagues, who suspect foul play but don't intervene – believing that the caller is a real cop doesn't contradict the knowledge that he's perverted and corrupt. She does what he says because he has the power, and the powerful close ranks against girls and fast-food workers. The film portrays her generation as being as unfamiliar with trustworthy authority as it is with female body hair. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Producers

Sophia Lin
Lisa Muskat
Tyler Davidson
Theo Sena
Craig Zobel
Written by
Craig Zobel
Director of Photography
Adam Stone

Editor

Jane Rizzo
Production Designer
Matthew Munn
Original Score
Heather McIntosh
Production Sound Mixer
Christopher Gebert
Costume Designer
Karen Malecki

©Bad Cop Bad Cop Film Productions, LLC
Production Companies
Dogfish Pictures in association with Muskat Filmed Properties and Low Spark Films presents a Bad Cop/Bad

Cop production
Executive Producers
David Gordon Green
James Belfer
Carina Alves

Cast

Ann Dowd
Sandra
Drea Walker

Becky
Pat Healy
Officer Daniels
Bill Camp
Van
Philip Ettinger
Kevin
James McCaffrey
Detective Neals
Dolby Digital

In Colour
[2.35:1]

Distributor
Soda Pictures

she could play a key part, appeal to Sandra's vanity; he's offering her drama, sympathy, and a chance to get one up on Becky even as she gestures towards being responsible. ("Corporate always wants two people for a strip-search," she vapidly asserts.) It only takes Sandra being convinced for her staff to fall in, to varying degrees: she's the boss, and they all fear trouble with the cops. Vague suspicions that all might not be well are beaten back. But even the hoaxer cannot predict the moral flexibility of strangers – and part of his enjoyment seems to derive from that unpredictability. He finds an unexpectedly accommodating accomplice in Van, Sandra's fiancé, who's summoned to help when Sandra and the caller run out of willing employees to 'guard' Becky while the police are unaccountably delayed. Van, a little drunk, starts out baffled and suspicious, but soon grabs his chance to abuse Becky. Unlike Sandra, he

Ohio, the present. On a busy day at the ChickWich fast-food restaurant, stressed manager Sandra takes a call from a man identifying himself as Officer Daniels – actually a thirtysomething father calling from a well-appointed home. He claims to be in touch with Sandra's regional manager, and tells her that her young employee Becky has been accused of stealing money and is being investigated for drug crimes. Sandra follows instructions to summon Becky, strip-search her and confiscate her clothes. Sandra then agrees to bring in Becky's friend Kevin to take over while she returns to work, but he refuses the caller's orders and walks out, returning the phone to Sandra. The caller persuades Sandra to substitute her fiancé, Van. Van follows the caller's instructions

to examine intimately the naked Becky, watch her jump up and down, spank her and have her perform oral sex on him. Van departs in distress, and calls a friend to confess. Unaware of what has happened, Sandra enlists a deliveryman to take over guarding Becky, but he immediately becomes suspicious. Calling her manager, Sandra establishes that he knows nothing of the events, and summons the police. They identify the caller via phonecards he has purchased, and arrive at his office. Becky visits a lawyer and is advised to sue the ChickWich company. Interviewed on television, Sandra confirms that she and Van have parted, and claims that while she feels responsible, she acted in good faith. The closing credits reveal that 70 similar incidents have been recorded in 30 states.



Bollywood on fire: Nawazuddin Siddiqui

Gangs of Wasseypur Gangs of Wasseypur II

India 2010

Director: Anurag Kashyap

Reviewed by Naman Ramachandran

Anurag Kashyap first came to prominence in filmmaking circles for writing Ram Gopal Varma's *Satya* (1998), one of Indian cinema's best examples of the gangster genre. However, his feature-directing debut, the visceral abduction drama *Paanch* (2003), went unreleased; his next film, *Black Friday* (2004), a procedural about the 1993 Mumbai bomb blasts, was initially banned in India and released only after a long court process; and 2007's *No Smoking* divided critics and failed to find favour with audiences. All this while, Kashyap was earning a living writing mediocre Bollywood movies, but he was also beginning to acquire a cult following among discerning audiences and the country's independent film community. Then in 2009 came his first box-office success: *Dev D*, an edgy, drug-fuelled adaptation of Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's tragic 1917 novel *Devdas*. At the same time, *Gulaal*, his hard-hitting take on small-town student politics, won festival acclaim, as did its 2010 follow-up, *That Girl in Yellow Boots*. Thanks to changing

audience tastes in India, driven by a largely young population, his films are now perceived to be cool. He acts as creative producer on pictures made by some of the country's brightest independent talents, and although he dislikes the term, he has been dubbed the 'Godfather of Indian independent cinema'.

It is perhaps then wholly appropriate that Kashyap's latest film and his most ambitious to date, *Gangs of Wasseypur*, released in two parts, is in many ways a homage to *The Godfather* movies. Kashyap set out to make, in his own words, a commercial film, and simply to have fun. The result is a sprawling, giddy, hyperviolent ride through the badlands of northern India, spanning 68 years from 1941 to 2009, breaking stride whenever Kashyap finds something that holds his attention, and going off on hugely enjoyable tangents. These range, to give just a few examples, from a disquisition on north India's erstwhile coalmining mafia to an examination of the illegal gun-making process and languid, highly erotic seductions.

The Godfather, so to speak, of the film's first part is Sardar Khan, played by Manoj Bajpayee (who was one of the lead gangsters in *Satya*). As written by Kashyap and his team, Sardar is on the one hand a gangster seeking revenge on his nemeses, the Qureshi clan and mine-owner turned politician Ramadhir Singh. On the other, Sardar is often helpless before his rampant libido and has to contend with both

his wife and his mistress, two equally feisty women. Sardar is just one of the well-etched characters in a film teeming with them. Ramadhir, played magisterially in his first feature-length role by Tigra Manishu Dhulia, a director in his own right, is another, as is Sardar's second son Faisal, the Michael Corleone character, a pot-smoker who is reluctantly thrust into a decades-long gang war; the part is interpreted magnificently by Nawazuddin Siddiqui, an actor who is fast becoming the face of Indian independent cinema.

Though the film is undoubtedly Kashyap's most accessible and hence commercial to date, it doesn't bear any resemblance to the routine Bollywood fare churned out by Mumbai's dream factories. Bollywood is, though, a living, breathing presence in *Gangs of Wasseypur*: several characters are hugely influenced by Bollywood movies and style themselves in the manner of its popular stars; the film is punctuated by hit Bollywood songs, which also serve to denote the passage of time; and the mobile ringtones of practically any character with a phone is a Bollywood song. Cleverly, Kashyap and his writers have made the main antagonist, Ramadhir, resolutely anti-Bollywood. In a memorable monologue, he explains that the reason for his longevity is that he doesn't watch the movies; his opponents' relatively short lives, he believes, can be attributed to their desire



It's an adrenalin shot of a film...the sheer pace and drive of Kashyap's bravura approach ensure that once 'Gangs' hits its straps it barely pauses for breath

to emulate the lifestyles of Bollywood stars.

Another area where Kashyap scores is his choice of locations rarely seen in mainstream Bollywood films, with Rajeev Ravi's restless camera capturing both the beauty and the shabbiness of small-town northern India. Wasiq Khan's production design is meticulous, subtly delineating the changing periods with the introduction of film posters or household products. The locations mark a return to his roots for Kashyap, who was born in the area and grew up there. Setting films in authentic small-town India is a practice that's been popularised recently by Tamil filmmakers Bala, Ameer Sultan and M. Sasikumar, and *Gangs* duly carries a dedication to them in the opening credits.

Gangs of Wasseyapur is, then, an adrenalin shot of a film, powered along by an inventive score by Sneha Khanwalkar that's a grab-bag of diverse genres including north Indian folk, electronica and even Indo-Caribbean reggae. However, fatigue sets in during the second part, when the relentless eye-for-an-eye revenge-taking becomes repetitive. This is partly redeemed by a bloodsoaked bullet ballet of a shootout set in a hospital, comparable to similar sequences in John Woo's *Hard Boiled* (1992). The five-hour-plus running time and the plethora of characters might be daunting for some, but overall the sheer pace and drive of Kashyap's bravura approach ensure that once the film hits its straps it barely pauses for breath. Like Olivier Assayas' *Carlos* (2010) and Jean-Francois Richet's *Mesrine* films (2008), this is a movie where the two parts are best watched back to back with a short break, all the better to inhabit the noisy and colourful world of Wasseyapur.

Indian cinema has long been trying to produce a breakout film that will appeal to international audiences in the manner of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) or *City of God* (2002). Unfortunately, most of the resulting films have been an uneasy mix of Western filmmaking techniques and predominantly English-language dialogue, set in milieus that international audiences are supposedly comfortable with. Unsurprisingly, these crossover films have appealed neither to Indian audiences nor global ones. The late great Satyajit Ray maintained that he made films primarily for his native Bengali audience – any global recognition that followed was a bonus. Kashyap seems to have embraced

this philosophy and created a film that's uniquely Indian, despite having some Western influences. Festival acclaim has duly followed, with packed screenings at Cannes, Sydney, Toronto and Sundance among others, leading to commercial release in France and now the UK.

Perhaps *Gangs of Wasseyapur* and other breakout Indian films from 2012, including Cannes selections *Miss Lovely* and *Peddlers* (produced by Kashyap), are a harbinger of things to come. The fact that independent productions *Wasseyapur* and *Peddlers* were co-funded by mainstream Bollywood studios is also a welcome indication that the Bollywood machine is no longer wary of risking its coin on differently themed films. ☺

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Guneet Monga
Sunil Bohra
Anurag Kashyap

Story
Zeishan Qadri

Written by
Zeishan Qadri
Akhilesh Jaiswal
Sachin Ladia
Anurag Kashyap

Cinematography
Rajeev Ravi

Editor
Shweta Venkat
Matthew

Production Designer
Wasiq Khan

Music
Sneha Khanwalkar

Lyrics
Varun Grover
Piyush Mishra

Background Score
G.V. Prakash Kumar

Sound Design
Kunal Sharma

Costume Designer
Subodh Srivastava

Action
Sham Kaushal

Production Companies
Tipping Point
Films presents an

AKFPL production
in association with
Jar Pictures
Produced by
Viacom18 Motion
Pictures

Cast
Manoj Bajpayee
Sardar Khan

Richa Chadda
Nagma Khatoon

Reemaa Sen
Durga Khan

Piyush Mishra
Nasir

Nawazuddin Siddiqui
Faisal Khan

Jaideep Ahlawat
Shahid Khan

Vineet Kumar Singh
Danish Khan

Pankaj Tripathi
Sultan Qureshi

Vipin Sharma
Ehsan Qureshi

Jameel Khan
Asgar Khan

Satya Anand
JP Singh

Pramod Pathak
Sharif Qureshi/
Sultana Daku/
Badoor Qureshi

Yashpal Sharma
"Salaam-e-
ishq" singer

Huma Qureshi
Mohsina Khan
Anurita Jha
Shama Parveen
Tigmanshu Dhulia
Ramadhir Singh
Murari Kumar
Guddu

Gaurav Sharma
Iqlakh/boy 1 in jeep
Faisal Malik
Inspector

Gopal Singh
Sankalp Achrekar
Tangent

Mukesh Chhabra
Nawab, Shamshad
partner

Zeishan Quadri
Definite Khan

Aditya Kumar
Perpendicular/
Nawab Khan/Babua

Rajkumar Yadav
Shamsad Alam

Dolby Digital
In Colour
[2.35:1]

Subtitles

Distributor
Mara Pictures

Wasseyapur, British northern India, 1941. The territory is ruled by the Qureshi mafia, though its hegemony is challenged when Shahid Khan loots British grain trains passing through Qureshi land. Shahid refuses to heed warnings to stop encroaching on Qureshi territory. His gang is ambushed and wiped out by the Qureshis and he is exiled from Wasseyapur along with his pregnant wife. He begins working as a miner at Ramadhir Singh's colliery. Shahid's wife dies giving birth to their son, Sardar. One day, Shahid stands up for a harassed co-worker and kills a guard. Ramadhir recognises Shahid's power and employs him as a heavy. However, Shahid's rapid rise to popularity worries Ramadhir, who employs the Qureshis to kill him. Sardar escapes along with his uncle and swears vengeance on Ramadhir and the Qureshis.

Sardar grows up to become a gangster with considerable influence in the area. Ramadhir, meanwhile, becomes a politician, aided by the Qureshis. Sardar's gang and the Qureshi/Ramadhir nexus have a series of skirmishes over the decades with losses on both sides. Sardar has three sons, Danish, Faisal and Perpendicular, by his wife Nagma and one, Definite, by his mistress Durga. The Qureshis and Ramadhir plot to kill Sardar and Danish in succession. The pot-smoking Faisal is reluctantly thrust into a leadership role. After several skirmishes, Faisal kills the remaining Qureshis and Ramadhir and in turn is killed by his half-brother Definite, who is in league with Ramadhir's son. Faisal's family moves to Mumbai in 2009. Bloodshed continues in Wasseyapur.



Far left: Manoj Bajpayee



It's a wonderful life: Ben Affleck, Rachel McAdams

To the Wonder

USA 2012

Director: Terrence Malick

Certificate 12A 112m 48s

Reviewed by Nick Pinkerton

You cannot know what is happening in your lover's head, or prove the existence of God – two quandaries that braid together in *To the Wonder* – but lately there has been evidence of the existence of the film's director, Terrence Malick.

Malick was once an elusive, folkloric character, like Bigfoot or like the hermit musician Jandek, his fellow Texan. He was recognisable mostly from one ubiquitous on-set photograph, looking slightly startled, wearing a broad-brimmed hat and playback headphones. It was the photo that stood in for him when he was nominated for the 2012 Academy Award for Best Director, for *The Tree of Life*. But now we have surreptitious footage of Malick two-stepping at an Austin honky-tonk, and we have a new Malick movie which, for the first time, looks at the contemporary, familiar world.

As they say, familiarity breeds contempt. The approach of *To the Wonder*, Malick's sixth film in 40 years and second in 16 months, has been surrounded by foreboding early reviews. Where a film having two credited editors usually raises eyebrows, *Wonder*, like *Tree of Life* before it, has five, and reports have it that entire performances – Barry Pepper, Michael Sheen, Amanda Peet – disappeared on the virtual cutting-room floor, leaving Ben Affleck and Olga

Kurylenko as a couple named Neil and Marina, and Javier Bardem as a self-doubting priest.

Malick's most nebulous and potentially most divisive film to date, *To the Wonder* has the feeling of a movie made according to Jean Cocteau's advice: "What is being held against you – cultivate it, it is your essence." For some, myself included, this means a logical and welcome stylistic evolution; for others, that Malick has arrived at self-parody. Where stylistic and thematic consistency was once used as evidence that a single figure, the director, could exercise the same authorial influence on a film that a painter or novelist could on their art, it is now often taken as proof of a rut. But Malick's magic-hour photography, again by two-time DP Emmanuel Lubezki, in which the elusive sun is forever just peering over a rise in the distance or visible through a knot in a fence, isn't just some fall-back pictorialist cliché; it's the manifestation of Malick's deeply personal conviction, shared with J.M.W. Turner, that the sun is God.

By unhitching his visuals from the stories that made his greatest works (usually agreed upon as *Badlands*, *Days of Heaven* and perhaps *The New World*) compelling as well as beautiful, some will say that Malick has enervated his art. (This same criticism has been levelled at another of the surviving American masters, Michael Mann.) In fact, Malick's approach to classical motive and characterisation, or lack thereof, grounded in an early devotion to Heidegger, hasn't much changed. Decisions *just happen* in his films, as through an innate

process, without reference to or explanation of why or how – this is true of Neil and Marina's make-up and break-up in *To the Wonder*, of the priest's alienation from and reconciliation to God, as much as it is of the spontaneous acts of violence in *Badlands* or *Days of Heaven*.

Malick's relying on his movies to reveal themselves in post-production is also nothing new – famously, *Days of Heaven* only congealed when Malick had the inspiration of allowing Linda Manz, the latchkey-kid supporting actress, to provide the narration and child's-eye perspective that ultimately focused the film. Some reports would have you believe that *To the Wonder* was a movie made like cheap sausage, a great mass of exposed film thrown into a hopper and ground up. But then how does one explain the rhyming of images? The way that, shortly before taking up again with Marina, Neil (who works as an environmental watchdog) goes slogging through polluted muck investigating a toxic leak affecting the local water table, invoking the muddy silt on the Mont Saint-Michel tidal inlet where they'd earlier frolicked together? The way the sinister pumping motion of a toxifying oil derrick is picked up by a ride at a country carnival, by a dipping bird toy?

I balked at the news that Affleck, one of the flimsiest line-readers in contemporary cinema, had been chosen to deliver Malick's famous voiceovers, but *To the Wonder* makes knowing use of the actor's repeatedly proven insufficiency as a leading man, giving him a bare minimum of audible dialogue. The *Phantoms* star is just a phantom here, a curiously

reticent, dour figure darkening the margins of the widescreen frame, trudging along in the wake of the vibrant females around him. Kurylenko, who has some background in ballet, displays her dancer's limberness while gambolling and twirling; viewers will fall into two parties – those who think *no one acts like that* and those who shut up and *watch*. Rachel McAdams also appears, as diverting, evanescent old flame Jane; both relationships are limned in thicket-dense scenes conveying the same paradoxical combination of intimacy and distance implicit in the line: “I feel so close to you that I could almost touch you.”

Scratched elsewhere among my notes is this: “Everywhere you’re present and still I can’t see you.” I cannot now recall if this is Marina or Jane addressing their thoughts to Neil, or the priest addressing his to God. Affleck’s sidelining and Neil’s remoteness aren’t an accident but an essential element of a film which is at heart about loving and not feeling that love returned, while raising the question: is that love then wasted?

It’s an orchestral film, brimming with Wagner and Berlioz and Tchaikovsky, and the priest’s crisis of faith plays the contrapuntal melody to that of Neil and his women. While castigating his flock from the pulpit in his sermons – “To choose is to commit yourself, and to commit yourself is to run the risk of failure” – the priest is trying to shore up his own belief. Far from the planned community of tract houses where Neil and Marina live, he goes down among the wretched parishioners in the town (Bartlesville, Oklahoma, which goes unnamed on screen, as do the *dramatis personae*). The priest visits prison yards and hospitals and meth-devastated white ghettos with toys heaped on the front porches of tumbledown shacks, finding wrecked humans eager to receive Christ’s succour. Belief is, however, more difficult for formidable men like himself and Neil, whom he advises: “You have to struggle with your own strength.”

Those inclined to binary readings tend to oversimplify Malick’s films, to their inevitable detriment. As *The New World* was taken as the director’s unflattering counterpoint of Old World with New, *To the Wonder* has already



Olga Kurylenko, Ben Affleck

been received as a jeremiad against cookie-cutter suburbia, as though Malick had devoted the full extent of his powers to a feature-length cover of Pete Seeger’s ‘Little Boxes’. Such readings say more about the reader’s prejudices than Malick’s. In fact, there are few working artists with such a generous and infectious curiosity about the variety of life on this planet, the variety of human forms, of objects manmade and natural – there is a simply incredible Bierstadt buffalo herd! The film’s first words, from Kurylenko, are, “Newborn, I open my eyes” – and as ever Malick’s goal is to drop the scales from ours and let us see things afresh. The European Marina earnestly describes her adopted home in voiceover as “a land so calm, honest, rich”, while her daughter shows evident amazement at the bounty of an American supermarket. Later,

There are few working artists with such a generous and infectious curiosity about the variety of life on this planet, the variety of human forms

Marina will be visited by an Italian friend, played by Romina Mondello, who ridicules the stifling small-town scene, but there’s little reason that this single voice should overwhelm the film’s chorus.

Malick is one of few filmmakers who could, in the space of a few images, go from Mont Saint-Michel in Normandy to a fast-food drive-through in Oklahoma without implying a pejorative judgement about either, dismissing the Old World for the New or vice versa. At one point, Bardem’s priest preaches about the necessary will behind a husband’s conjugal love – “He does not find [his wife] lovely, he makes her lovely” – and Malick similarly does not film things because they are beautiful; they become beautiful because he films them.

Prefacing his 1997 study *American Visions*, the late Australian art critic Robert Hughes wrote of a phenomenon that *To the Wonder* innately understands, the “inextricably twined feelings of freedom and nostalgia which lie at the heart of the immigrant experience and are epitomised in America, to this day, as in no other country... No Europeans felt about the Old in quite the same way Americans came to, and none believed so intensely in the New.” Malick’s art of new horizons is defined largely by this tension of freedom and nostalgia, and if you cannot comfortably accommodate these concepts together, you will likely be left scratching your head if and when you make it to *To the Wonder*’s conclusion.

In that conclusion, the film’s final, refraining image returns to Mont Saint-Michel. Earlier, Neil and Marina had penetrated its heart, finding there a blooming red rose surrounded by a rime of frost. Now the island has receded into the distance. Seen so, it may recall the big house in *Days of Heaven*, or any of the quintessentially American images of longing that Malick is forever repurposing: George Stevens’s *Giant*, Andrew Wyeth’s *Christina’s World*, the view of the Hotel del Coronado across the San Diego Bay that inspired Frank L. Baum to dream of the Emerald City, Gatsby’s green light or the City on a Hill so beloved of native politicians. The film leaves us with this longing vantage, in a state of perpetual, unfulfilled becoming. That is to say it leaves us precisely where we are – but we are not the same. ☹

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Sarah Green
Nicolas Gonda

Written by
Terrence Malick

Director of Photography
Emmanuel Lubezki

Edited by
A.J. Edwards
Keith Fraase
Shane Hazen
Christopher Roldan
Mark Yoshikawa

Production Designer
Jack Fisk

Music Composed by
Hanan Townshend

Supervising Sound Editor
Craig Berkey

Costume Designer
Jacqueline West

©[no company given]
Production Companies
A FilmNation
Entertainment
presentation

in association
with Brothers K
Productions
Executive Producers
Glen Basner
Jason Krigsfeld
Joseph Krigsfeld
Film Extracts
The Tree of Life (2010)

Cast

Ben Affleck
Neil
Olga Kurylenko
Marina
Rachel McAdams
Jane
Javier Bardem
Father Quintana
Tatiana Chiline
Tatiana
Romina Mondello
Anna
Tony O'Gans
Sexton
Charles Baker
carpenter

Marshall Bell
Bob

Dolby Digital
In Colour
[2.35:1]
Part-subtitled

Distributor
Studiocanal Limited

10,152 ft +0 frames

France, present day. An American man and a European woman, identified in the closing credits as Neil and Marina, are introduced on a train trip together, recording their happiness in digital video. They tour the famous monastery at Mont Saint-Michel, where they frolic in the tidal basin at low tide. Returning to Paris and Marina’s ten-year-old daughter, they decide to move together to the United States, where they set up house in a planned community of lookalike tract homes somewhere in the south-west. He returns to work as an environmental watchdog; she spends time with the local priest; the daughter goes to school, where she begins to feel alienated by the foreign surroundings that at first delighted her. As Neil is hesitant to marry Marina, she and her child return to France. In their absence, he takes up with an old acquaintance, Jane, a local woman taking care of her family ranch, before inviting Marina to come back to him – this time alone. Neil’s vacillation is mirrored in the priest’s crisis of faith – he is unable to commit himself to believing in God, even as he goes through the motions of ministering to his flock. Eventually the priest seems to reconcile himself to his faith, while Neil and Marina return to France together. The final image is of Mont Saint-Michel, seen from a distance.

Babeldom

United Kingdom 2011
Director: Paul Bush

Reviewed by Isabel Stevens

Cinema was born into the age of the skyscraper – the Lumières' visions of terra firma's trains and factories arrived only eight years after the term was first coined. Ever since, filmmakers have had a certain fixation with the dizzying peaks of the skyline, from the vertiginous clock face in Harold Lloyd's *Safety Last!* to the 34th floor of *Die Hard*'s Nakatomi Plaza – not to forget the soaring, malevolent towers of science-fiction films such as *Metropolis*, *Blade Runner* and more recently *Dredd*.

A cautionary tale about a futuristic megalopolis burying itself as it expands forever skywards, British animator and experimental collagist Paul Bush's *Babeldom* is nonetheless intoxicated with the view from the clouds. His beguiling, shape-shifting travelogue starts there, looking down over Pieter Bruegel's 16th-century painting of Babel (its streets and denizens lovingly animated) before plunging into the cavernous, light-starved depths of the titular imaginary city. His camera then glides majestically through crumbling underground tunnels, up empty staircases, into anodyne office atria and over misty, steel monoliths, the quest for the summit cheered on by pounding drums and a soaring choral accompaniment.

In a similar vein to science-vault raiders Semiconductor, Bush inventively crafts his urban labyrinth not only from fragments of filmed footage of subterranean ruins and sparkling metropolises, but also from cutting-edge graphics and moving-image research culled from various scientific and mathematical institutions. And so the climb from the arcology's base to its pinnacle becomes not only a journey from the past into the future, but also from the real into the unreal.

The dystopic flipside to Le Corbusier's dream of a vertical city, it's a complex architectural vision equal parts awesome and terrifying. Two nameless, faceless narrators-cum-lovers – one an archaeologist in our present, the other an explorer and Babeldom citizen – vividly reflect on the city, a place with a "crown of cranes",




City symphony: Youla Boudali

where "the living outnumber the dead". It is itself a palimpsest of history. Cathedrals and other such architectural glories are endlessly preserved far below, but ultimately forgotten. J.G. Ballard's *The Drowned World* springs to mind (the hazy footage even has an underwater feel to it).

Just as in Ballard's *High Rise*, in Babeldom vertical living and social stratification go hand in hand. The claustrophobic nature of life buried under the haphazard bricolage is forcefully evoked not by images of the citizens themselves, but rather the male explorer's ruminations and shots of eerie and dim passageways. Meanwhile, out of microscopic dancing matter and glimpses into vast, globular, 3D virtual models, Bush seamlessly conjures the city's menacing, gargantuan stratosphere. The mystery of what these spectral creations actually are and where they come from is no small part of their allure (the list of companies and laboratories referenced in the credits is as impressive as it is idiosyncratic, ranging in subject from cybernetics and nanotechnology to fluid mechanics and pipe inspection).

Delivered via a computerised voice accompanying a hypnotic medley of graphs and diagrams, Bush's explanation of the genesis of his city (sudden and comprehensive advances in mathematics and technology), the evolution of its language and its time warp (in Babeldom, our narrator confides, you could meet yourself at birth and death) are intriguing but not as intricately imagined as the architectural spectacle of the city itself. Yet even when some familiar sci-fi tropes creep in (a population under the spell of a controlling, voyeuristic government), the manner in which they are envisaged enlivens them: in one instance, the screen splinters into a multitude of mini computer-simulated clones animated in poses recalling Muybridge's early cinematic experiments.

Babeldom, with its creative geography and searching voiceover, not to mention its *Vertigo*-esque love of spirals, is clearly indebted to Chris Marker and his epistolary travelogues. Bush's musings on memory, chaos and time don't, however, quite reach the poetic tenor of Marker's narration, occasionally drifting into a strained melancholy. However, Bush's parting impression – of two narrators (the details of their relationship kept vague) searching endlessly for each other in worlds that may or may not overlap as their memory of one another fades – is a potent one. This is a film – and a city – to get lost in. 

The Bay

United Kingdom/USA/Canada 2012
Director: Barry Levinson
Certificate 15 84m 29s

Reviewed by Anton Bitel

There must be something in the water. Although the horror genre has imagined all manner of flora and fauna, typically in monstrous or mutated form, rising up the food chain in response to the hubris of humanity's environmental incursions and irresponsible experiments, nonetheless our screens have largely been kept free of microorganisms, viruses and parasites, perhaps in part because it is in their nature not to be seen. The odd exception – most notably David Cronenberg's *Shivers* (1975) – proves the rule. This changed in the noughties, when a run of icky features – *Cabin Fever*, *Splinter*, *Contagion* – revelled in the havoc that microbiology can wreak on the human body. Then, just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water, 2012 delivered *two* films featuring mass outbreaks of aquatic parasites: first, Park Jeongwoo's wormy schlockodrama *Deranged*, and now *The Bay*, the first foray into horror by genre-hopper Barry Levinson (*Diner*, *Rain Man*, *Sphere*, *Bandits* etc).

Set in the fictional town of Claridge, Maryland, on Chesapeake Bay, *The Bay* borrows familiar tropes from Steven Spielberg's 1975 classic *Jaws* (corpses discovered in the water with wounds expressly suggestive of a shark attack, a mayor determined to quell any panic during the town's peak summer season) and more broadly from the nature's-revenge subgenre (environmental pollution engendering a new species of deadly organisms) to create a mash-up of well-worn horror motifs – except that they are all filtered through an elaborate found-footage framework which, without quite refreshing the clichés, certainly muddies the waters. Oren Peli, writer/director of the now canonical found-footage frightener *Paranormal Activity* (2007), may be one of the producers here, but *The Bay*'s deft mix of multiple media (television footage, radio broadcasts, Skype conferences, CCTV, home movies, text messages, emergency service recordings, video diaries and so on) makes for an altogether more sophisticated fragmentation of the film's story into a mosaic of (not always reliable) evidence. As in George A. Romero's *Diary of the Dead* (2007), the 'found footage' comes edited and with a commentary – in this case from reporter-on-the-scene Donna Thompson (Kether Donohue), desperate after the event to expose the hushed-up truth of what has happened.

The killer here turns out to be *Cymothoa exigua*, a louse-like sea creature that devours the tongues of fish – only the Chesapeake variant, literally 'on steroids' and possibly irradiated, grows at an extraordinary rate, eating its human hosts from the inside. While this affords the occasional short, sharp jolt of formication-inducing body horror, Thompson (and Levinson along with her) is also documenting how information, misinformation and disinformation can spread no less virulently than flesh-eating parasites in an age of diversified mass media. For even if some kind of truth emerges from Thompson's bombardment of sources, we also see and/or hear the evolving situation variously mischaracterised as a shark attack, a domestic murder, a bacteriological outbreak, a satanic rite, a mass drugging, a terrorist plot and a joke. "Let's not go around scaring

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by

Paul Bush

Written by

Paul Bush

Camera

Paul Bush

Edited by

Lawrence Huck

Soundtrack

Andy Cowton

Composed by

Stuart Earl

Sound Recorded,

Edited and Mixed by

Zhe Wu

Digital Animation

Paul Bush

Gergeley Barta

Adrian Flury

Mina Mileva

Catia Peres

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Productions

Production

Company

Ancient Mariner

Productions

Cast

Mark Caven

man

Youla Boudali

woman

Ian Gouldstone

computer man

Masako Tomiya

computer woman

Dolby Digital

In Colour

[1.85:1]

Distributor

Independent

Cinema Office

A science-fiction travelogue around the future city of Babeldom, made up of filmed footage of urban centres and virtual moving images and graphics from scientific and mathematical institutions.

A female archaeologist in our present recalls conversations she once had with a male explorer from Babeldom. Meanwhile he traverses an overcrowded high-rise dystopia searching for her and reflecting on the vertical maze of the city.

Breath of the Gods

A Journey to the Origins of Modern Yoga

Germany 2012, Director: Jan Schmidt-Garre

Reviewed by Michael Brooke

"It's not so easy to find historic evidence in India," complains German documentary-maker Jan Schmidt-Garre at the start of this engaging feature-length delve into the roots of modern yoga as established by Sri Tirumalai Krishnamacharya (1888-1989). The guru himself only appears in photographs and silent (and blurry) archive footage, but Schmidt-Garre ends up with an impressive roster of interviewees with direct personal links, whether blood descendants or former pupils.

The film initially aims to establish whether modern yoga is genuinely ancient in origin or largely the creation of Krishnamacharya and his disciples, but Schmidt-Garre's own personal journey gradually takes over. This approach can often lead to self-indulgence on the filmmaker's part, but in this case it's justified: when he's first talked through 16 'asana' positions by Krishnamacharya's former pupil Pattabhi Jois, Schmidt-Garre becomes a surrogate for the audience, an amateur surrounded by professionals with decades of experience. This comes to a head when Schmidt-Garre tries and fails to cross both legs over each thigh, much to Jois's amusement and, no doubt, the lay viewer's intense sympathy.

Jois also became one of the major figures in modern yoga, as did B.K.S. Iyengar, a Krishnamacharya pupil who became guru to Yehudi Menuhin among many others. Iyengar talks in detail about its history, specifically the claim that a century ago yoga in its practical (as opposed to philosophical) manifestation was as alien to most Indians as it was to Westerners, regarded with either bafflement or open contempt as little more than a circus routine involving people contorting themselves into impossibly uncomfortable poses.

Mercifully, Schmidt-Garre isn't the only practical demonstrator. In addition to footage of Krishnamacharya himself (and assorted family members, including his wife Namagiri and daughters Pundarikavalli and Alamelu), a recreation of a private command performance for the Maharajah of Mysore and a more public demonstration involving multiple participants emphasises the striking beauty of yoga when conducted at the highest level of physical attainment. Krishnamacharya's son T.K. Sribhashyam is also keen to stress yoga's philosophical side (whose ancient roots are much more clearly defined), and identifies an unmistakable asana position in a Hindu temple painting of Narasimha, avatar of the god Vishnu.

Krishnamacharya seems to have been a hard taskmaster ("His hands were like



Mat men: 'Breath of the Gods'



Dead in the water: 'The Bay'

anyone with crazy and outlandish stories – that serves no one's benefit," says Mayor John Stockman (Frank Deal), ironically enough the film's chief human villain and a devotee of truth's suppression.

Certainly *The Bay* is spinning its own crazy and outlandish stories, but the incontrovertible fact remains that during the 1990s toxic algal blooms resulting from runoff pollution created panic in the Chesapeake area as fish populations died en masse and human swimmers exhibited mysterious rashes. Even today much of Chesapeake Bay (where Baltimore-born Levinson spent his vacations as a child) continues to be a marine 'dead zone'. *The Bay* may be an eco-horror mockumentary, but it emerged from Levinson's initial intention to make a documentary about Chesapeake's devastated ecology.

"If this wasn't a tragic circumstance it'd be fuckin' comedic!" comments Thompson wryly as she looks back on her clueless behaviour during the event. Much of the (qualified) humour in *The Bay* derives from the obliviousness of its small-town ensemble in the face of impending – and then utterly overwhelming – disaster. Thompson has her own strong views on where responsibility lies, but for the viewer it remains unclear whether the catastrophe is a result of deep-seated corruption and malice or good old-fashioned incompetence. As nature's revenge, *The Bay* is somewhat old-hat – but as a depiction of an America deaf and blind to her impact on the environment and woefully unprepared for the potentially fatal consequences, it is as grimly satirical as 'The Airborne Toxic Event' section of Don DeLillo's 1985 novel *White Noise*. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by

Barry Levinson
Jason Blum
Steven Schneider

Screenplay

Michael Wallach

Story

Barry Levinson
Michael Wallach

Director of

Photography

Josh Nussbaum

Edited by

Aaron Yanes

Production Designer

Lee Bonner

Music

Marcelo Zarvos

Sound Mixer

Jonathan Gaynor

Costume Designer

Emmie Holmes

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(UK) Limited

Production

Companies

A Baltimore Pictures/

Haunted Movies

production

An Alliance Films

presentation in
association with IM
Global, Hydraulx
Entertainment
and Automatix
A Barry Levinson film
Executive Producers
Brian Kavanaugh-
Jones
Jason Sosnoff
Colin Strause
Greg Strause

Cast

Will Rogers

Alex

Kristen Connolly

Stephanie

Kether Donohue

Donna Thompson

Frank Deal

Mayor Stockman

Stephen Kunken

Dr Abrams

Christopher

Denham

Sam

Nansi Aluka

Jaquiline

Kimberly Campbell

Nurse Rebecca

Beckett
Clayton-Luce
Charles
Dave Hager
Jerry, fisher

Dolby Digital/
Datasat/SDDS
In Colour
[1.85:1]

Distributor
Momentum Pictures

7603 ft +8 frames

In 2012 reporter Donna Thompson offers an eyewitness commentary, over Skype, on a devastating biological event that killed most of the population of Claridge, on Chesapeake Bay in Maryland, during the town's 4 July celebrations in 2009. Using a variety of confiscated (but leaked) footage and audio recordings, Thompson shows a community misinformed and ill-equipped to deal with the mutant waterborne parasites that devour victims from the inside.

Two oceanographers looking into local fish deaths are killed after discovering a new strain of outsized marine isopods; their surviving documentation is mysteriously ignored – as are reports from environmentalists about runoff pollution from a farm owned by the mayor. Outbreaks of vomiting and boils disrupt the 4 July pageant; meanwhile local police (and student reporter Thompson) mistakenly ascribe some mutilated corpses to a murderer, before encountering the horrific truth. Dr Jack Abrams is overwhelmed by dying patients whose condition leaves disease-control agencies bewildered. By the time Stephanie, Alex and their baby Andrew sail into Claridge to visit family, it has become a ghost town. Alex dies from parasites ingested in the water just hours before. The town's few survivors are compensated on condition that they keep silent, and the disaster is officially ascribed to the summer's high bacteria levels.

iron – if he gave one slap, it might take days to recover”) but Iyengar makes it clear that this discipline was an important part of the process, not least in terms of demonstrating yoga’s virtues to a sceptical public. Although Schmidt-Garre doesn’t draw attention to this, a tacit acknowledgement of yoga’s health benefits is revealed by the longevity of its masters: Krishnamacharya reached his century, Jois got to 93 (he died during production, but enough was shot to give him significant screen time) and Iyengar is still alive at 94, though he looks considerably younger as he prods and cajoles his pupils into precise execution of his routines while wearing just a pair of blue shorts.

Schmidt-Garre’s documentary background is in classical music, reminders of which are threaded throughout *Breath of the Gods*, particularly the recurring use of Rimsky-Korsakov’s ‘Hindu Merchant’s Song’ from his 1896 opera *Sadko*, both in the original and via Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji’s memorably lush 1922 piano transcription. The latter is a particularly apposite accompaniment, being an Anglo-Indian’s reinterpretation of a Russian’s impression of an Indian character. It also allows Schmidt-Garre to avoid using authentic Indian music, something he felt he didn’t understand enough to treat with sufficient respect. More generally, he goes to some lengths to avoid depicting India through overtly orientalist eyes – he can’t resist a snake-charming interlude, but his respect for the country and his evident belief in the universal application of modern yoga’s principles shine through. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Producers
Jan Schmidt-Garre
Marieke Schroeder
Director of Photography
Diethard Pregel
Film Editor
Gaby Kull-Neujahr
Production Designer
Irina Kromayer
Sound
Martin Müller
Rohan
Patrick Veigel
Costume Designer
B.M. Ramachandra
Choreography
R. Alexander Medin

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Production Companies
A PARS Media

production developed with the financial support of MEDIA programme of the European Commission
Supported by FilmFernsehFonds Bayern and Deutscher Filmförderfonds
A Jan Schmidt-Garre film

With
B. K. S. Iyengar
Pattabhi Jois
T. K. Sribhashyam
T. Krishnamacharya
Srinivas Sharma
Sri Govind Das
Sri Shubha
Pundarikavalli

Alamelu
Alex Medin
MG Narasimhan

In Colour
[1.85:1]

Distributor
Blue Dolphin

German theatrical title
Der Atmende
Gott Reise zum Ursprung des modernen Yoga

Broken

United Kingdom 2012
Director: Rufus Norris

Reviewed by Samuel Wigley

The neighbourly proximity of three families living on a suburban estate has toxic consequences in acclaimed theatre director Rufus Norris’s film debut. In the opening moments, 11-year-old Skunk (Eloise Laurence) witnesses the inexplicable beating of one of her neighbours – Rick (Robert Emms), a nervous young man still living with his parents – by another, Mr Oswald (Rory Kinnear), the lone father of three troublemaking schoolgirls. It’s the summer before Skunk starts at her new school, and this shocking act of violence heralds both tragedy and a quickening in her loss of innocence.

Daniel Clay’s source novel drew inspiration from *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and like the tomboyish Scout Finch in Harper Lee’s schoolroom classic, Skunk bears early witness to the unfairness of the adult world, seeing if not quite comprehending the cruel ease with which sensitive Rick’s fragile temperament is snapped by his bruising contact with the Oswalds. The bad family on the block, the foul-mouthed Oswald girls are dynamos of bullying and bad manners, wreaking emotional destruction on anything that comes into their radioactive orbit. When one cries rape, Rick is easy collateral damage, a Boo Radley for the *Shameless* era.

Where *Broken* rises above the tide of that summer-my-life-changed-forever coming-of-age dramas is in its sharp, keenly observed dialogue, and in a crop of impressively naturalistic performances. As Skunk, Laurence makes a tremendous debut, by turns precociously even-footed in her relationship with her lawyer father Archie (Tim Roth) and childishly petulant. Her awkward summertime romance with Jed (Bill Milner) is touchingly handled, the young lad impressing her with mispronounced and barely understood vocabulary smuggled out from across the threshold of adulthood.

Though ostensibly close to the films of Mike



Breakdown cover: Eloise Laurence

Leigh or Ken Loach in setting, *Broken* effects a dreamier, impressionistic feel through Rob Hardy’s gauzy cinematography and the delicate, fractured structure. Adoring ambered shots of the baby Skunk shortly after her delivery suggest that the Terrence Malick of *The Tree of Life* (2011) may have been as much an influence. It’s easy to be bewitched by this likeable young protagonist, and moved by the portrayal of a close father-daughter relationship, but there’s a generosity of spirit here that extends even to the errant Oswald siblings, an endless source of pithy rudeness and bulldozing vigour.

To its detriment, Norris’s film becomes overstuffed and melodramatic in its later stages, only a few notches from hysteria. Happenstance is piled upon coincidence as, in one night, a chain of tragic events is set off like a timed fireworks display. Some thinning down has occurred from the novel, with five Oswald siblings reduced to three, but it’s a pity no one applied the smelling salts to the story’s overwrought finale.

The meaning of the title was more explicit in the novel, where ‘Broken’ was a nickname given to the hapless Rick. In the film, the implication may be that it’s Britain that’s broken, yet Norris’s flawed but distinctive adaptation is optimistic, finding hope and vitality in youth doing what it’s always done. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Producer
Dixie Linder
Tally Garner
Nick Marston
Bill Kenwright
Screenplay
Mark O’Rowe
Adapted from the novel by Daniel Clay
Director of Photography
Rob Hardy
Editor
Victoria Boydell
Production Designer
Kave Quinn
Original Music
Electric Wave Bureau
Production Sound Mixer
Alistair Crocker
Costume Designer
Jane Petrie

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Production Companies
BBC Films and BFI present in association with LipSync Productions and

Bill Kenwright Films
a Cuba Pictures production
Made in association with LipSync Productions and Bill Kenwright Films
a Cuba Pictures production
Developed by BBC Films
Made with the support of the National Lottery through the BFI’s Film Fund
Executive Producers
Joe Oppenheimer
Norman Merry

Cast
Tim Roth
Archie
Cillian Murphy
Mike Kiernan
Rory Kinnear
Bob Oswald
Robert Emms
Rick
Zana Marjanovic
Kasia
Clare Burt
Mrs Buckley

Bill Milner
Jed
Denis Lawson
Mr Buckley
Eloise Laurence
Skunk
Charlie Booty
baby Skunk
Lily James
older Skunk
Lucas Fernandes-Pendse
Harry Barlow
Michael Fernandes-Pendse
Henry Barlow
Faye Daveney
Saskia
Martha Bryant
Sunrise

In Colour
[1.85:1]

Distributor
StudioCanal Limited

London, the present. Eleven-year-old diabetic Skunk lives with her lawyer father Archie and au pair Kasia. The latter is in a relationship with schoolteacher Mike. Skunk witnesses her neighbour Rick, a young man with learning difficulties, being brutally attacked by Mr Oswald, a widower looking after three unruly daughters. One of the Oswald daughters has claimed that Rick raped her, though the police discover she is lying. Disturbed by his experience, Rick locks himself in his bedroom and is subsequently committed.

Skunk begins a relationship with Jed, a young boy from the neighbourhood, and prepares herself for starting at a new school. She is bullied by the youngest of the Oswald daughters, who threatens her with retribution from her big sister. Kasia breaks off with Mike and starts seeing Archie. After Mike intervenes in a bullying incident, he too is the victim of a rape slur and is attacked by Mr Oswald. Mike is aggrieved when he has to depend on the help of Archie to acquit him.

Rick returns from hospital but is unnerved by verbal abuse from the Oswald girls. Suffering a relapse, he kills his parents. Falling out with her father, Skunk runs away from home. Visiting Rick, she finds his dead parents. She is kept hostage by Rick and, without her insulin, goes into hypoglycaemic shock. Mr Oswald enters the house and rescues Skunk, but she remains unconscious in hospital. People from her life flash before her eyes in a dream sequence. She later regains consciousness.

Broken City

USA 2012

Director: Allen Hughes

Reviewed by Nick Pinkerton

"Are you dumb, or Catholic?" Catherine Zeta-Jones, the wife of New York City's crooked mayor, asks the private dick her husband has paid to have her followed in the week before elections. "Both," he answers.

In *Broken City*, a character study in the uniform of a crime drama, Mark Wahlberg plays that dick with both qualities very evident. His Billy Taggart, an ex-cop turned independent operator, is not a very good detective; he routinely blows his cover and has to resort to brawling, which he's better at than stealth. But Taggart has a bedrock sense of morality and duty, aggravated by his guilt over the shooting that got him bounced off the force seven years ago.

Broken City, which Wahlberg also produces, is the sort of solid, boots-on-the-concrete genre picture this sterling specimen of the screen's endangered-from-the-neighbourhood guys excels in – last year's *Contraband*, likewise released in the unpretentious winter months after the awards-season parade, was cut from the same cloth. The difference is that Wahlberg has better collaborators this time around. Allen Hughes, *Broken City*'s director, is half of the fraternal filmmaking team who burst on to the scene with, and never quite equalled the promise of, 1993's *Menace II Society*. Working alone seems to have gotten Hughes some of his groove back – his roving, prowling camerawork is purposeful rather than show-offish, particularly in a crucial meeting between Taggart and Russell Crowe's well-fed, venal, backslapping mayor, 'Nicky' Hostetler. In thrall to the austere, imprisoning gridwork of New York bridges – Taggart is introduced crossing the Verrazano-Narrows into Staten Island – Hughes gives the city a presence, a harrowing malevolence coupled with an irresistible undertow suck familiar to

many a long-time New Yorker. As one character has it: "The only thing better than getting out of that damn city is going back to it."

The original screenplay by Brian Tucker abounds in piquant, tossed-off dialogue ("Doesn't anybody in this town talk in complete fucking sentences any more?") and the raw material of a decade of *Daily News* headlines. The prologue has Taggart exonerated of an on-duty shooting through a backroom handshake as the courthouse steps fill with protesters, an all too familiar scene, while at the centre of the film's mystery is a land-grab deal involving Hostetler's sale of a public housing project to private hands, perhaps inspired by the 2006 big-ticket sale of Stuyvesant Town-Peter Cooper Village. The movie contains only a couple of dust-ups and one brief, jarring sequence of vehicular combat; otherwise, the violence is repressed, a constant nettling threat among the rounds of sparring dialogue, reaching an apex in the mayoral debate between populist brawler Hostetler and the blue-blood opponent with whom he's polling in a dead heat.

While the rest of America has gone in for MMA, New York is still a boxing town, and the language of the Sweet Science infects the conversation in *Broken City*. Sexual insecurity, particularly a creeping homophobia, is shown to be behind much of this chest-thumping, and there is a particularly well-handled subplot involving Taggart's actress girlfriend appearing in some *Blue Valentine*-style indie art-smut. It looks like the kind of 'daring' thing destined for accolades – but let's say a word for the fundamentally sound *Broken City*, the story of a club fighter trying to do the right thing among the city's contenders. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Producers

Randall Emmett
Mark Wahlberg
Stephen Levinson
Arnon Milchan
Terry Schwarzman
Allen Hughes
Remington Chase

Written by

Brian Tucker

Director of

Photography

Ben Seresin

Editor

Cindy Mollo

Production Designer

Tom Duffield

Music

Atticus Ross

Claudia Sarne

Sound Mixer

Richard Schexnayder
Costume Designer
Betsy Heimann

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Entertainment (USA)

Inc. and Georgia

Film Fund Seven

LLC in the US

©Georgia Film

Fund Seven LLC

and Monarchy

Enterprises S.a.r.l. in

the rest of the world

Production

Companies

Emmett/Furla Films,

Inferno International,

Regency Enterprises

present in association

with Black Bear

Pictures an Emmett/

Furla Films and New

Regency production

A Closest to the

Hole Productions

and Leverage

Communications

production

An Allen Hughes

production

In association

with Envision

Entertainment and

1984 Private Defense

Contractors

A film by Allen Hughes

Executive Producers

George Furla

Stepan Martirosyan

William S. Beasley

Jeff Rice

Scott Lambert

Brandt Anderson

Brian Tucker

Danile Wagner

Frederik Malmberg

Adi Shankar

Spencer Silna

Mr Mudd

Cast

Mark Wahlberg

Billy Taggart

Russell Crowe

Mayor Hostetler

Catherine

Zeta-Jones

Cathleen Hostetler

Barry Pepper

Jack Valliant

Kyle Chandler

Paul Andrews

Natalie Martinez

Natalie Barrow

Jeffrey Wright

Carl Fairbanks

Justin Chambers

Ryan

James Ransome

Todd Lancaster

Michael Beach

Tony Jansen

Alona Tal

Katy Bradshaw

Dolby Digital/

Datasat/SDDS

In Colour

[2.35:1]

Distributor

Studiocanal Limited

New York City, the recent past. NYPD detective Billy Taggart is tried for shooting a suspect in unclear circumstances. When damning evidence emerges, the mayor's office hushes it up in exchange for Taggart's resignation.

Seven years later, Taggart is working as a private eye and struggling to pay his bills. The mayor, Nicky Hostetler, is campaigning for re-election. Hostetler hires Taggart to trail his wife Cathleen, who is having an affair, and find out the identity of her lover. Taggart reports on Cathleen's meetings with a man who is revealed to be the manager of the rival campaign. Shortly afterwards, the campaign manager is shot;

subsequent investigations reveal that he was the same-sex lover of Hostetler's closeted opponent Jack Valliant. Taggart realises that Hostetler hired him under false pretences. Furious at being used, he investigates further and discovers that Cathleen and the campaign manager were meeting to exchange information about a deal in which the mayor sold city property to line his own pockets. When confronted with this accusation, Hostetler counters with video evidence about the shooting Taggart was involved in seven years earlier – the suspect he killed was unarmed. Ready to do penance, Taggart decides to face jail along with the mayor.

Caesar Must Die

Italy 2011

Directors: Paolo Taviani, Vittorio Taviani

Reviewed by Philip Kemp

The Taviani brothers, arthouse darlings of the 70s and 80s (*Allonsanfan*, *Padre padrone*, *The Night of San Lorenzo*), have rather dropped off the international map in recent years. But though they've slowed down they have not stopped making films, and the unexpected triumph of their most recent movie, *Caesar Must Die*, at the Berlin Film Festival (where it won the Golden Bear) brings them back into the spotlight. The film also introduces something relatively new in their oeuvre – a teasing penchant for blurring the line between artifice and reality.

At first sight, we seem to be watching a documentary about a production of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, its text somewhat adapted, recently staged by the inmates of Rome's high-security Rebibbia jail. But early on there's a hint that things aren't quite so straightforward. We start at the end – the full-costume production, given before a mixed audience of inmates and invited outsiders, and received with wild enthusiasm. But then there's a title, 'Six Months Earlier', and the screen switches from full colour to black-and-white. A simple enough device, but quietly suggesting that what we see may not be as close to unfiltered reality as it initially appears.

It soon becomes evident – from framing, from camera placement, from the convicts' delivery of their lines – that a good deal of what we see of the run-up to the production has been staged, and quite possibly scripted and rehearsed. Which immediately raises the question – how much should we believe? While Giovanni Arcuri (playing Caesar) and Juan Bonetti (Decius Brutus) are rehearsing the scene where Decius persuades Caesar to attend the senate despite his wife Calpurnia's ominous dream, Arcuri suddenly slips out of character and starts accusing Bonetti of sneaking around behind his back and badmouthing him. The director Fabio Cavalli and the rest of the cast watch in dismay as the pair barge out into the corridor, seemingly intent on a punch-up. But the framing, and the cutting, make it improbable that this was a spontaneous quarrel – though of course it may have reflected a genuine animosity between the two men which the Tavianis picked up on and put to use. Similarly there is a moment when two prison guards watch fascinated from a high gallery while another scene is being rehearsed, and start discussing the character of Mark Antony. A third joins them, saying it's time the prisoners were back in their cells, but the other two persuade him to wait until the scene's over. Real? Most probably not. Truthful? It has the ring of it.

Other moments, however much set up, ring equally true to their situation: Arcuri reading Caesar's 'De Bello Gallico', remarking, "And to think that at school I found this boring!"; Cosimo Rega (Cassius), a Neapolitan, marvelling, "It feels like this Shakespeare lived in the streets of my city"; an inmate, refurbishing the prison theatre in preparation for the play, stroking the plush seat of one of the chairs and musing wistfully, "Maybe a woman will sit here." But Salvatore Striano (Brutus) relating the story of the play to his two enthralled cell-mates does feel less than convincing – the more so since (in the film's one clear



Bard behind bars: 'Caesar Must Die'

piece of out-and-out contrivance) Striano had already been released in 2006, and returned to Rebibbia just to take part in the play and film. And a montage of the cast members back in their cells at night, each staring at the ceiling while we hear their thoughts on the soundtrack, seems to belong to a different (and cheesier) movie altogether.

Wryly humorous touches abound. Chided by Cavalli for slowness, Rega responds: "I've been here 20 years and you say let's not waste time!" The occasional rewriting of Shakespeare might give purists a shock: Decius Brutus's protest that he must know some reason why Caesar declines to come to the senate, "Lest I be laughed at when I tell them so," becomes "The other senators will take the piss." Cries of "For freedom!" from the conspirators carry their own ironic charge, as do the references to Brutus and his cohorts as "men of honour";

several members of the cast, as we're told early on, have been jailed for involvement in the Mafia. The Tavianis hardly need to emphasise the relevance of the play as a whole to current Italian politics; that, they most likely feel, is a given.

We end with a return to full colour and a longer reprise of the final production in front of an audience and its ecstatic reception, the actors cheering as loudly as the spectators. It's a moment of uplifting jubilation before the dying fall as the cast, now back in drab prison garb, are returned to their cells and the doors locked on them, each a solitary prisoner. One of them, Cosimo Rega, we follow into his cell and watch as he mooches around and makes himself coffee, reflecting as he does so, "Since I got to know art, this cell has become a prison." Another scripted line? Quite possibly – but it hardly matters. Truth to art – as the Tavianis and Rega have just reminded us – is what matters. 📺

Credits and Synopsis

Producer
Frazia Volpi
Story/Screenplay
Paolo Taviani
Vittorio Taviani
Screenplay in collaboration with
Fabio Cavalli
Loosely based on
The Tragedy of Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare
Director of Photography
Simone Zampagni
Editor
Roberto Perpignani

Music
Giuliano Taviani
Carmelo Travia
Sound
Benito Alchimedè
Brando Mosca

@Kaos
Cinematografica -
Stemal Entertainment
- Le Talee
Production Companies
Grazia Volpi present a
Kaos Cinematografica
production
in association

with Stemal
Entertainment. Le
Talee, La Ribalata
centro studi Enrico
Maria Salerno
In collaboration
with RAI Cinema
With the support and
sponsorship of the
Direzione Generale
per il Cinema -
Le Talee
Production
Companies
Grazia Volpi present a
Kaos Cinematografica
production
in association

of Roma Capitale
With the sponsorship
of Ministero
della Giustizia
Executive Producer
Donatella Palermo

With
Cosimo Rega
Cassius
Salvatore Striano
Brutus
Giovanni Arcuri
Caesar
Antonio Frasca
Mark Antony

Juan Dario Bonetti
Decius
Vincenzo Gallo
Lucius
Rosario Majorana
Metellus
Francesco De Masi
Trebonius
Gennaro Solito
Cinna
Vittorio Parrella
Casca
Pasquale Crapetti
legionary
Francesco Carusone
fortune-teller
Fabio Rizzuto

Strato
Maurilio Giaffreda
Octavian
Fabio Cavalli,
Maurilio Giaffreda

Dolby Digital
In Black & White
and Colour
[1.85:1]
Subtitles

Distributor
New Wave Films

Italian theatrical title
Cesare deve morire

Rebibbia high-security jail, Rome, the recent past. Non-inmate theatre director Fabio Cavalli prepares to stage an adaptation of Shakespeare's 'Julius Caesar' with a cast of long-term convicts. After a brief scene (the death of Brutus) from the eventual performance, we flash back six months to the auditions and casting and – since the prison theatre is being refurbished – see the rehearsals taking place in various venues around the prison. The cast – especially Giovanni Arcuri (playing

Caesar), Salvatore Striano (Brutus), Cosimo Rega (Cassius) and Juan Bonetti (Decius Brutus) – become increasingly caught up in the roles they're playing and how these reflect on their present incarcerated lives.

The play is staged before an audience of inmates and invited outsiders, and receives a standing ovation. Afterwards, the leading members of the cast are taken back and each locked into his solitary cell. End titles tell us what subsequently became of them.

Chained

USA/Canada 2011
Director: Jennifer Lynch
Certificate: not submitted 90m

Reviewed by Anton Bitel


Legacies sometimes have to be borne like shackles. Though she's a talented director in her own right, Jennifer Lynch's very surname conjures a cinematic pedigree that threatens to overshadow her own individual achievements. To put it starkly, when a film is described as 'Lynchian', it is not Jennifer and her oeuvre (1993's much maligned *Boxing Helena*, 2008's confident comeback *Surveillance*, 2010's disastrous and disowned *Hisss*) that immediately spring to mind. Yet if her father David's feature debut *Eraserhead* (1977), whose lengthy production began when Jennifer was still a toddler, is often regarded as expressing Lynch Sr's fretful ambivalences towards his own paternity, then Lynch Jr wreaks artful revenge with her latest feature *Chained*, where the enduring heritage of bad fathering – a preoccupation that can be traced back to her 1990 *Twin Peaks* tie-in book *The Secret Diary of Laura Palmer* – is explored in agonising detail.

Chained too features a 'killer Bob', although unlike the demonic other of *Twin Peaks*, Vincent D'Onofrio's crazed cab driver is confrontingly, even absurdly, human – and here, as in *Surveillance*, Lynch filters the otherwise familiar tropes of the cinematic serial killer through very young eyes. Nine-year-old Tim (Evan Bird) and his mother Sarah (Julia Ormond) have just come out of an illicit horror film when they step into Bob's taxi, where the vicarious, fictive transgressions of cinema fast give way to real atrocities as Sarah is summarily murdered (off screen) and Tim imprisoned in his captor's remote farmhouse. Yet despite treating women as entirely disposable receptacles for his most errant drives, Bob is revealed in impressionistic flashback to be as much a victim as his young prisoner, having himself endured horrifying abuse as a boy. Bob is a monster not born but made, and the abominable outrages that he commits are offset by the gruff but genuine affection he forces on Tim, making another monster in his own image.

Redubbed 'Rabbit', the teenaged Tim (Eamon Farren) is as emaciated as beer-bellied Bob is portly, and their odd-couple relationship, for all its depraved dysfunction, represents a parodic exaggeration of the father-child dynamic. Yet it is when Bob starts letting Tim off the chain, hoping the boy will follow in his murderous



Rabbit hole: Eamon Farren

footsteps and determined to guide him through his first “taste of a woman”, that Tim must decide who he really is, bringing all the film’s oedipal tensions to a bloody head. Like *Bereavement* (2010), *The Skin I Live In* (2011), *The Seasoning House* (2012) and *Paura 3D* (2012), Lynch’s film is concerned with the damage done to children by the adults who have power over them, perhaps reflecting contemporary anxieties about the economically and ecologically ravaged world we’re bequeathing to the next generation. Accordingly, the chain Bob attaches to Tim’s leg becomes a vivid metaphor for the inescapable bonds of circumstance and environment that fetter children’s growth and shape what they become – even if a twisty (and somewhat rushed) coda brings genetics back into the thematic mix, playing out the film’s thorny nexus of nature and nurture. File it under bleak, disturbing and claustrophobic, but do not dismiss it as ‘torture porn’. 

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by

David Buelow
Rhonda Baker
Lee Nelson

Screenplay

Jennifer Lynch
Based on a screenplay by
Damian O'Donnell

Director of

Photography

Shane Daly

Edited by

Chris A. Peterson

Production

Designer

Sara McCudden

Music

Climax Golden Twins

Sound Mixer

Kevin Hemmingson

Costume Designer

Brenda Shener

©Chained

Productions LLC

Production

Companies

Anchor Bay Films

presents an

Envision Media

Arts production

A film by Jennifer

Lynch

Financed by Envision

Media Arts

Produced with the

interim financing

by National

Bank of Canada

- TV. and Motion

Picture Group

Produced

with financial

participation

from SaskFilm

Produced with the

participation of

the Government of

Saskatchewan, The

Canadian Film or

Video Production

Tax Credit RGB

Productions, Inc.

Executive

Producers

Kevin Kasha

Craig Anderson

Gerard Demaer

Cast

Vincent D'Onofrio

Bob

Eamon Farren

Tim, 'Rabbit'

Gina Philips

Marie

Conor Leslie

Angie

Evan Bird

Tim, young 'Rabbit'

Jake Weber

Brad Fittler

Julia Ormond

Sarah Fittler

Dolby Digital

In Colour

[2.35:1]

Distributor

Anchor Bay

Entertainment

UK Ltd

Not submitted

for theatrical

classification

Video certificate: 18

Running time:

90m 22s

US, the present. Brad drops wife Sarah and son Tim at the cinema, recommending that they take a cab home after the film. Later, mother and son get in Bob's cab, and are abducted to his isolated home. Bob murders Sarah, and informs Tim of the new regime: keep the house clean, serve Bob meals and eat the leftovers, bury Bob's serial victims in the cellar, collect newspaper clippings about their disappearances, do nothing without permission. After attempting to escape, Tim is chained to the wall by his ankle.

Years later, upset after seeing a father humiliate his son in his cab, Bob decides to start using anatomy textbooks to teach “the human puzzle” to the now teenaged (and still chained) Tim; he also reveals that Brad has remarried. Bob's serial killings continue. A nightmarish flashback shows how, as a boy, Bob endured horrific abuse protecting his younger brother. Unshackling Tim, Bob forces him to choose his first woman from a university yearbook, and brings student Angie home. Tim stabs her, and drags her body to the cellar. Bob takes Tim outside for the first time to ‘hunt’ but, realising that he has been tricked and that Angie isn't dead, races home to finish her off. Tim kills Bob.

Tim confronts Brad with a letter proving that Brad paid his older brother Bob to kill Sarah and Tim. Brad dies in a struggle. Tim returns to Bob's house.

Crawl

Australia 2011

Director: Paul China

Certificate 15 77m 32s

Reviewed by Kim Newman


The Coen brothers' *Blood Simple* (1984) was, like many of their films, indebted to specific crime writers, in that case James M. Cain and Jim Thompson – though the title comes from Dashiell Hammett. What *Blood Simple* didn't do was lift its plot from earlier sources: it's in the vein of previous cowboy noirs, not an imitation of them. Indeed, its chain-of-misunderstandings premise was strong and unusual enough to become a model for many subsequent movies. Writer-director Paul China and his producer brother Benjamin narrow their focus considerably – their debut *Crawl* isn't quite a remake of *Blood Simple* (the film has already been remade, in a fresh cultural context, by Zhang Yimou as *A Simple Noodle Story*) but it uses the same character archetypes – a sweaty, unethical bar owner who needs to hire a killer, a hitman who double-crosses his employer, a resilient woman caught up in the cross-purposes conflict of these two – and winds up with a similar stalk-and-slash (or rather, stalk-and-chop) sequence and a moment of ironic communion between the (perhaps fatally) wounded antagonists.

Even at a tight 78 minutes, with an end-credits crawl as long as the various other crawls in the film (wounded man by the roadside, submissive waitress trying to pay off a debt to a sadist), this feels overextended for its basic, shrugged-off anecdote. One difference between *Crawl* and the Coens' chatty oeuvre is that here the characters say very little, and spend a great deal of the running time as if on pause, listening out for a telltale sound or wondering what's beyond the door. Blood seeps slowly, lapping against the hitman's immaculate hat or dripping into the empty case that once held the incriminating weapon. As Marilyn Burns, a character named after the star of *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974), Georgina Haig – from the underrated 2010 outback horror *Road Train* – is called on mostly to look apprehensive and suffer, taking a nose-squelching blow to the face before wreaking her revenge on the killer. Most of the flavour in the film comes from the opposition of long-faced, cowboy-hatted George Shevtsov as the melancholy-seeming Croatian hitman, whose nastiest moments are accompanied by a sly smile, and congenitally sweaty, jittery



Crawl of the wild: Georgina Haig

Paul Holmes as the verminous bar owner who forces a waitress to submit to a spanking to pay off a debt and suffers from premonitory nosebleeds whenever his plans go awry.

The film has a classy, violin-based score from Christopher Gordon and makes good use of periods of silence or near-silence to accompany its more painful, tortuous stretches. *Crawl* is, however, a fairly artificial enterprise – rooted in situations taken from other movies, set in a nebulous nowhere which ties together its shaggy-dog plotting simply because there are so few locations and characters involved that naturally everyone keeps running into each other, and mechanical in its callous attitude to its less unpleasant characters. Still, it's impressive enough in its use of limited resources to suggest that the China brothers will be worth watching if they can come up with some fresher material. 

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by

Benjamin China

Brian Breheny

Written by

Paul China

Cinematography

Brian Breheny

Film Editing

John Scott

Bin Li

Production Design

John Anderson

Music

Christopher Gordon

Sound Recording

John Schiefelbein

Costume Design

Maria Tsoukas

©Crawl Productions

Pty Ltd

Production

Company

Crawl Productions

presents

Cast

George Shevtsov

the stranger

Georgina Haig

Marilyn Burns

Paul Holmes

Slim Walding

Lauren Dillon

Holly

Catherine Miller

Annie

Andy Barclay

Travis

Bob Newman

Rusty Sapp

Lynda Stoner

Eileen

In Colour

[2.35:1]

Distributor

Arrow Film

Distributors Ltd

6,978 ft +0 frames

Australia. The Stranger, a Croatian hitman, murders gas-station owner Rusty at the behest of Slim Walding, a bar owner and loan shark who has been unable to get Rusty to repay a debt. Driving out of the area, the Stranger runs down Travis, a young man who is having car trouble, and wrecks his own vehicle. Waitress Marilyn Burns, one of Slim's employees, is at home, waiting for Travis, to whom she is about to become officially engaged. Finding Travis's keys, the Stranger goes to the isolated house and menaces Marilyn. Police officers call on Slim and tell him about Rusty's murder; they also tell him that the killer left the murder weapon behind – a gun stolen from Slim. Assuming that the Stranger intended to double-cross and incriminate him, Slim takes to the road and finds the Stranger's wrecked car. He arrives at Marilyn's house, where the Stranger kills him with an axe. Marilyn gets hold of the gun and shoots the Stranger, who produces an engagement ring to prove that he has killed Travis.

Fire in the Blood

India/United Kingdom/Canada 2012
Director: Dylan Mohan Gray

Reviewed by Ashley Clark

Dylan Mohan Gray's debut documentary is a polemic that aims to shed light on a vastly complex global health issue. Countless people in the developing world have died of Aids because the antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) they need are obscenely expensive. The film squarely places the blame on western multinational pharmaceutical companies who refuse to allow cheap generic drugs to be manufactured or imported, causing access to ARVs to be (at best) limited in the places where they are most needed. Utilising a fairly conventional mixture of interviews, harrowing news footage and statistics interwoven with emotive personal stories, *Fire in the Blood* examines the reasons for this desperate situation and looks at the leaders and organisations campaigning to change it.

The film opens in Kampala, Uganda, with physician Peter Mugenyi expounding provocatively on the stark socioeconomic inequalities of the situation: "There is no developed country which would have tolerated the loss of millions of their citizens while lifesaving drugs were available," he says. Traversing the continent to South Africa, we meet Edwin Cameron, an HIV-positive white man who happens to be financially secure enough to afford ARVs. In contrast, we also meet HIV-positive South African activist Zackie Achmat, co-founder of Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), who has lost several relatives to Aids because they couldn't afford ARVs.

This opening salvo effectively establishes the film's key thesis: people are dying because they are poor, not because there is no treatment available. Gray goes on to track the historical development of drugs to battle Aids and the consequent behaviour of both pharmaceutical companies and international governments in disseminating those drugs, highlighting not just the capitalist greed and fierce patent protection that define such first-world policies, but also the reasons used to justify them. One especially pernicious example is the negative stereotypes of 'uneducated Africans' and their purported inability to use medicine correctly (a claim proved false late in the film).

Adding some shade to proceedings, a valuable contrast is made between the dire situation in Africa and the one in India:



Road to recovery?: 'Fire in the Blood'

there the social stigma attached to HIV-positive people is similar, but because India rewrote its patent laws in 1970 to allow the production of generics, it offers a blueprint for providing more affordable medicine.

Whether in Aids clinics or World Health Organization (WHO) meetings, *Fire in the Blood* demonstrates impressive access, taking us deep into the world of the activists and lobbyists battling against the Goliath of 'Big Pharma'. Interviews with key business figures supplement the film's arguments – particularly compelling are the comments of Dr Yusuf Hamied, the progressive CEO of the Indian-founded pharmaceutical company Cipla, which decided to offer ARV therapy drugs to the developing world at \$800 per year. Meanwhile former Pfizer vice president Peter Rost (whose past as a radical whistleblower goes oddly – perhaps disingenuously on Gray's part – unmentioned) is the lone voice of experience from a western multinational perspective.

Given such an unwieldy and complex issue, it's both unsurprising and understandable that *Fire in the Blood* occasionally lacks nuance. For example, in its quest to position the multinational pharmaceutical companies as the chief villains of the piece, it leaves the role of international governments comparatively unexplored. Furthermore, the film's globetrotting style occasionally decenters the narrative and inspires some rather random editing, leaving us chronologically confused. That said, Gray deserves credit for his own restraint. Unlike recent social activist documentaries such as Frank Poulsen's *Blood in the Mobile* (2010) or Fredrik Gertten's *Big Boys Gone Bananas!* (2011), where the filmmakers put themselves front and centre of the narrative to make a point, Gray restricts himself to an intermittent, matter-of-fact voiceover. Such is the clarity of his ideological stance that any grandstanding would feel redundant.

Ultimately, despite occasional structural deficiencies, *Fire in the Blood* emerges as an impassioned and informative account of a subject likely to provoke a substantial reaction in anyone who sees it. Taken on its own terms as an activist documentary bursting with moral outrage, it's not just a success but a stirring tribute to the countless people who have lost their lives when such a fate was avoidable. Ⓢ

Fire with Fire

USA 2012
Director: David Barrett
Certificate 15 97m 19s

Reviewed by Vadim Rizov

One of six films Bruce Willis appeared in last year, *Fire with Fire* was the only one deemed so bad as to be released direct to DVD in the US (even the reputedly dismal *The Cold Light of Day* had a token theatrical release). It's basic late-night cable fare of the rottest variety, with Willis in unconscious self-parody mode as a cop, all laconic punches and smirking sighs. Josh Duhamel takes the lead as firefighter Jeremy Coleman, who witnesses Aryan Brotherhood gang leader David Hagan (Vincent D'Onofrio) commit convenience-store murder. Coleman must kill Hagan and everyone associated with him to assure safety both for himself and for lady love Talia Durham (Rosario Dawson, who deserves better).

There's one intentionally funny moment, when Coleman is ordered by the Eastside Crips gang, from whom he's trying to buy a gun, to put his teeth on the kerb. "We gonna *American History X* this boy!" one crows. "I always wanted to do that." Otherwise, it's the kind of film in which our hero yells "noooooooooo" in agony when Talia is shot, and washes off the blood of guilt after his first kill with a long shower that just barely avoids a male-model ass shot. Ⓢ

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by Randall Emmett Curtis Jackson George Furla Matthew Rhodes Andrew Deane Written by Tom O'Connor Director of Photography Christopher Probst Edited by Paul Harb Production Designer Nathan Amundson Music Trevor Morris Sound Mixer Richard Schexnayder Costume Designer Mia Maddox	Entertainment A film by David Barrett Executive Producers Stepan Martirosyan Remington Chase Ted Fox Fredrik Malmberg Daniel Wagner Jess Rosenthal Martin Richard Blencowe Michael Blencowe Mark Stewart Anthony Gudas Michael Corso Brett Granstaff Jeff Rice Brandt Andersen James Gibb Zev Foreman Nadine de Barros Jean Lee Barry Brooker Stan Wertlieb Stephen Eads	Julian McMahon Robert Quinton 'Rampage' Jackson Wallace Curtis Jackson Lamar Richard Schiff Harold Getthers Vinnie Jones Boyd James Lesure Craig Eric Winter Adam Vincent D'Onofrio Hagan
Production Companies Voltage Pictures presents a Voltage Pictures and Cheetah Vision & Emmett/Furla Films production in association with Envision Entertainment & Paradox Entertainment, Inc. and Mandalay Vision & Industry	Cast Josh Duhamel Jeremy Coleman Bruce Willis Lieutenant Mike Cella Rosario Dawson Deputy Talia Durham	Dolby Digital In Colour [2.35:1] Distributor Warner Bros Distributors UK 8,758 ft +8 frames

Long Beach, California, the present. Firefighter Jeremy Coleman witnesses the murder of a convenience-store owner and his son by Aryan Brotherhood gang leader David Hagan. Coleman agrees to testify against Hagan. After spending eight months in New Orleans in a witness protection programme, Jeremy is looking forward to testifying and moving back to Long Beach with his new girlfriend, marshal Talia Durham. When Hagan's men shoot and injure Durham, she is taken to Phoenix for her own safety. Coleman escapes from the authorities and returns to Long Beach. Obtaining a gun, he makes his way to Hagan and kills him and his men before leaving with Durham.

Credits and Synopsis

Producer Dylan Mohan Gray Written by Dylan Mohan Gray Director of Photography Jay J. Odedra Editor Dylan Mohan Gray Music Ashutosh Phatak Sound Design Kunal Sharma	©Sparkwater Productions India Pvt. Ltd. Production Companies Dartmouth Films and Films Transit International present a Sparkwater India production Executive Producer Christopher Hird	In Colour [1.85:1] Distributor Dartmouth Films
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A documentary focusing on the ongoing battle between western multinational pharmaceutical corporations and Aids activists over the rights to distribute affordable lifesaving antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) to the world's developing nations.

For Ellen

USA 2011

Director: So Yong Kim

Reviewed by Tony Rayns

For Ellen adapts its title from Beethoven's 'Für Elise', but there's nothing remotely European about it. After her autobiographical return to her Korean roots in *Treeless Mountain* (2008), So Yong Kim's third feature is a resolutely American indie film, complete with nods to mumblecore and road movies. The story focuses on Joby Taylor, singer with a struggling cock-rock band, who suddenly discovers paternal feelings for the young daughter he hardly knows after years of estrangement from her mother. His wife Claire has a new partner and wants a clean break with Joby: her proposed divorce settlement offers him 50 per cent of the house they bought together (although he never coughed up his mortgage payments), on condition that he forfeits any rights to see their daughter Ellen.

Claire's refusal to discuss anything, compounded by his inchoate feelings of indignation, triggers a wild emotional gamble. Having given up hope in his earnest and hopelessly straight attorney, Joby drunkenly leaves a message on Claire's phone. He reminds her that it was only his pleading that persuaded her not to abort Ellen, and threatens to produce the papers from the Chicago abortion clinic in court. This throw of the dice pays off. Joby is granted two hours alone with Ellen (he extends the time by paying a secret visit to her room to ask what she thinks of him), and has to face the fact that he (a) has no parenting skills, and (b) has no conceivable role in her future. The ending sees him revert to type: irresponsible, impulsive and irremediably immature, he walks out on his latest girlfriend and hits the road to nowhere in particular, like some latter-day Beat.

Kim says the project was sparked by her thoughts about the absent father in *Treeless Mountain*, and that she revised her original script considerably when Paul Dano came on board as star and co-executive producer. Dano has done everything from *L.I.E.* (2001) to *There Will Be Blood* (2007) and *Meek's Cutoff* (2010) via a stint in *The Sopranos*, but has never before



Rocker fella: Paul Dano

been asked to carry a film. He certainly has to carry this one: he is literally never off-screen, and more scenes than not show him alone in his car or motel room, communing with his mobile, playing air guitar or just looking woebegone. As a portrait of an overgrown boy, deeply solipsistic and emotionally clueless, it's spot-on. Dano is particularly good in the scenes showing Joby's brief time with his daughter: nervous, half-tongue-tied, over-eager to please. It's a fine performance.

But is it enough? Like *In Between Days* (2006) and *Treeless Mountain*, the film tends to get bogged down in minutiae without finding any special significance or resonance in the details. For better or worse Kim's films trap the viewer in the problems of the protagonists, never using the supporting characters as anything more than foils. It's the central limitation of her work: a negation of drama. Here, despite the accuracy of the observation and the strong contributions of the actors, it's ultimately hard to care about Joby. Or about the film which enshrines his travails. Ⓢ

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Jen Gatten
Bradley Rust Gray
So Yong Kim
Written by
So Yong Kim
Director of Photography
Reed Morano Walker
Edited by
So Yong Kim
Bradley Rust Gray
Production Designer
Ryan Smith
Music Composition
Johann Johannsson
On Set Sound Mixer
Mikhail Sterkin

©For Ellen, LLC
Production Companies
A Deerjen & Soandbrad production
Filmed with the support of the New York State Governor's Office for Motion

Picture & Television Development
Executive Producers
Paul Dano
Jonathan Vinnik
Michael Clofine
Rui Costa Reis
Tricia Quick
Dave Berlin

Cast
Paul Dano
Joby Taylor
Jon Heder
Fred Butler
Jena Malone
Susan
Margarita Levieva
Claire Taylor
Julian Gamble
Mr Hamilton
Dakota Johnson
Cindy
Shaylena Lynn
Mandigo
Ellen Taylor

Dolby Digital In Colour
[2.35:1]

Distributor
Soda Pictures

New England, winter. Rock singer Joby Taylor drives all night from a gig to a divorce-settlement meeting with his estranged wife Claire, who won't speak with him in private. Next day Joby learns from his lawyer Fred Butler that the proposed settlement denies him access to his young daughter Ellen; he refuses to sign. A member of his band fires him when they argue on the phone. Butler informs him that Claire will take him to court unless he signs next day. Joby has dinner at Butler's home, cooked by his mother, and goes drinking with Butler afterwards – concluding that his well-meaning lawyer is useless to him. He leaves a drunken message on Claire's phone, reminding her that she wanted to abort Ellen and that he still has the clinic's paperwork to prove it. He is woken by a call from Ellen and dashes over to meet her at Claire's house. Claire's lawyer Hamilton allows him two hours with the girl. They go to a toyshop, a fast-food restaurant and a bowling alley. Joby later sneaks back to talk more with Ellen secretly in her room; he realises he has no place in her life. He's on his way back to his motel when he's intercepted by his girlfriend Susan, who has shown up uninvited. After sex, Joby wanders out into the snow for a smoke – and impulsively hitches a ride on a passing timber truck.

Gangster Squad

USA 2013

Director: Ruben Fleischer

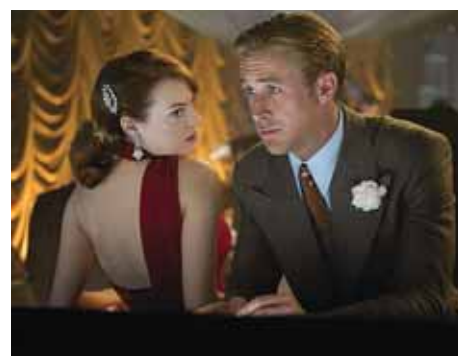
Certificate 15 112m 44s

Reviewed by Kate Stables

Down these mean streets, unafraid but definitely tarnished, comes director Ruben Fleischer's swaggering, cartoonish slice of LA *noir*, a film that plays at cops and robbers with borrowed style and negligible substance. It is based on journalist Paul Lieberman's hardboiled account of the true-life covert police squad who took on gang boss Meyer 'Mickey' Cohen in the late 1940s, translating it for the screen into a compendium of clichés lifted from other – better – movies. Screenwriter Will Beall (once an LAPD officer himself) has pared the dense original story down to a guerrilla war waged between Josh Brolin's Sergeant John O'Mara, a square-jawed trope of a hero heading a team of loyal stereotypes, and Sean Penn's gurning, power-crazed Cohen. Their characterisations are as sandpapered of subtlety as their bullet-riddled raids: Cohen babbles about his Manifest Destiny, and O'Mara muses on his moral equivalency with Cohen (that favourite canard of the death-dealing lawman) as the campaign gets bloodier.

Combined with Fleischer's decision to draw on 90s *noir* as his visual and thematic source (his mid-century Los Angeles owes more to *L.A. Confidential* and *Mulholland Falls* than to *Chandler* or *Chinatown*), this all gives the movie a curiously third-hand feel. What's been created here is a simulacrum of a simulacrum, a film that despite its real-life origins has few wisps of period authenticity or historical context clinging to it. When Nick Nolte's Chief Parker orders the unit gruffly into action ("This isn't a crime wave, it's enemy occupation") or the team make a zigzag heist on a heroin convoy, the narrative has the stylised, cut-to-the-chase texture of a videogame, a set of mission challenges interspersed with old-time expositional 'cutscenes' in colour-saturated period locations. Though frankly, *L.A. Noire*, the hit videogame which covers the same period in the LAPD's history, contains ludic delights that *Gangster Squad* cannot aspire to...

There's a similarly slick, airbrushed quality to the performances. Brolin employs none of the shades-of-grey he used in 2007's *No Country for Old Men*, leaving O'Mara as dull a straight arrow at the film's end as he was at its start. Ryan Gosling's playboy sergeant Jerry skips through the film employing a curious high-pitched voice and a variety of fetching fedoras in lieu of a performance. Most curious, though, is Sean Penn's Cohen, a mannered, manic performance strongly reminiscent of Robert De Niro's Al Capone in *The Untouchables* (1987). ➔



Cop shop: Emma Stone, Ryan Gosling

Unsurprisingly, other reminders of De Palma's gangster oeuvre loom large in this film, with Fleischer staging a staircase shootout in the Park Plaza Hotel, and channelling *Scarface* as a cornered Cohen sprays his Tommy gun in slo-mo, shouting "Here comes Santy Claus." Stiff with gunfire and overkill, the film's action set pieces are poorly structured and choreographed, with Fleischer intent on image-making (fireballs, flashgun-framed fights, a head drilled open against a glass door) rather than building up tension or narrative force.

Gangster Squad's USP, as expounded by Fleischer, lies in giving a period tale a cool contemporary gloss, in the manner of Guy Ritchie's impudent *Sherlock Holmes*. How disappointing then that the much ballyhooed 'modern edge' promised by this 'next-wave *noir*' turns out to be no more than a posturing pastiche of what's gone before. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by

Dan Lin
Kevin McCormick
Michael Tadross

Written by

Will Beal
Based on the book
by Paul Lieberman

Director of Photography

Dion Beebe

Edited by

Alan Baumgarten
James Herbert

Production Designer

Maier Ahmad

Music

Steve Jablonsky

Production Sound Mixer

Scott Harber

Costumes

Designed by
Mary Zophres

Stunt Co-ordinator

Doug Coleman

©Warner Bros.

Entertainment
Inc. (US, Canada,
Bahamas &
Bermuda)

©Village Roadshow Films (BV) Limited (all other territories)

Production Companies

A Warner
Bros. Pictures
presentation
in association with

Village Roadshow
Pictures

A Lin Pictures/
Kevin McCormick
production

Executive Producers

Paul Lieberman
Ruben Fleischer
Bruce Berman

Cast

Josh Brolin
Sergeant John
O'Mara

Ryan Gosling
Sergeant Jerry
Wooters

Nick Nolte
Chief William Parker,
'Whiskey Bill'

Emma Stone
Grace Faraday

Sean Penn

Mickey Cohen
Anthony Mackie
Officer Coleman
Harris

Robert Patrick
Officer Max Kennard

Giovanni Ribisi
Officer Cornwell

Michael Peña
Officer Navidad

Ramirez

Mireille Enos
Connie O'Mara

Sullivan Stapleton
Jack Whalen

Holt McCallany
Karl Lockwood

Dolby Digital/ Datasat/SDDS

In Colour
[2.35:1]

Distributor

Warner Bros
Distributors (UK)

10,146 ft +0 frames

Los Angeles, 1949. Sergeant John O'Mara is ordered to head up a secret police unit to wage guerrilla war on gang boss Mickey Cohen, who has effectively taken over the city. O'Mara's colleague Jerry is secretly sleeping with Grace, Cohen's girlfriend. Rescuing the squad after a disastrous casino heist, Jerry elects to join them. He and wireman Keeler plant a bug in Cohen's mansion. The unit's campaign of hijacking heroin convoys and attacking Cohen's businesses culminates in a daring raid on his illegal bookmaking wire service. Finding their wiretap, Cohen lures the squad to a booby-trapped lorry in Chinatown, but they are unharmed. Cohen begins to suspect Grace of informing on him. Cohen's men track Keeler using the wiretap pulse and kill him. O'Mara's wife and their baby narrowly escape when their house is shot up. Cohen kills Jerry's friend Jack, for hiding Grace from him. The unit is officially disbanded. Grace offers to testify against Cohen in court. O'Mara and his squad launch an assault on Cohen and his gang in the Park Plaza Hotel. After a fierce gun battle, Cohen escapes in a car, with O'Mara clinging to it. O'Mara captures Cohen after a fistfight. The squad's activities are kept secret, and O'Mara quietly leaves the LAPD.

The Guilt Trip

USA 2012

Director: Anne Fletcher

Certificate 12A 95m 28s

Reviewed by Vadim Rizov

Sixteen years after *The Mirror Has Two Faces*, *The Guilt Trip* restores Barbra Streisand to leading-lady position, having been relegated in the interim to supporting duty in *Meet the Fockers* and *Little Fockers*. Both Streisand and co-star Seth Rogen have executive-producer status here, but there's little doubt who wielded a heavier hand. As son Andy Brewster, Rogen's main task is to play comic straight man to Streisand's mild maternal terror Joyce, who substitutes emotional suffocation and squealing for comedy. Whether standing in Uggs in the midst of heavy snow and clucking over her son's lack of appropriate shoes or getting uncharacteristically drunk and playing the slots in a Las Vegas casino, Streisand attempts to show her range but she's more herself than ever, one long kvetch for attention.

Luckless with women, organic chemist Andy has invented an eco-friendly cleaning fluid made from palm oil, coconuts and soybeans, and he's travelling cross-country pitching it to potential buyers. FDA-approved and safe to drink, his invention suffers from a confusing name ('Scioclean', mispronounced 'Psychoclean' by one person) and Andy's lacklustre sales pitch, thus doubling as screenwriter Dan Fogelman's complaint about the difficulties of getting a greenlight for a script (the presentation of the product matters more than its actual merits, to the detriment of worthier fare). The business meetings are largely bundled into montages, save a disastrous first pitch to K-Mart and another fiasco encounter where the constant interruptions of Andy's mother – who's joined him on his road trip – lead to him yelling at a rep from warehouse giant Costco.

There are two big mother-son blowouts, but mostly the pair coexist in loving friction. After Andy reassures Joyce that he went to UCLA because they have the best organic chemistry department in the country, not because he wanted to get far away from her, they paper over their differences until the third act. Devoting much screen time to the now 70-year-old Streisand garnering physical



Wrong gear: Seth Rogen, Barbra Streisand

compliments (as in *The Mirror Has Two Faces*) is apparently no longer an option, though there's still the requisite scene in which her son assures a made-up Joyce that she looks nice.

Former choreographer/director Anne Fletcher executes competent, unimaginative coverage, undermined by distractingly bad rear projection in the car which casts weird halos of light around Rogen's head. The only attempt at style is the inexplicable final shot, which pulls back some 30 feet through an airport, taking in the crowd around separating mother and son. Neither is visible, and this last-minute attempt to reveal a big wonderful world outside Streisand's consciousness (the human comedy, each player with their problems!) comes off as a mystification.

Andy's product-placement-heavy plotline climaxes, bizarrely, with his successful pitch to the Home Shopping Network (HSN), in which he's given five minutes to replace scientific explanations with a personable soft sell. This scene exists largely to facilitate a cross-promotional arrangement with HSN, whose millions of female viewers were thought to be the demographic for this brand-conscious movie. Its subsequent commercial underperformance is said to bear responsibility for yet another cancellation of a remake of *Gypsy*, Streisand's long-discussed comeback vehicle. With this, at least, *The Guilt Trip* has performed a public service. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by

Lorne Michaels
John Goldwyn
Evan Goldberg

Written by

Dan Fogelman

Director of Photography

Oliver Stapleton

Edited by

Priscilla Nedd Friendly
Dana E. Glauberman

Production Designer

Nelson Coates

Music

Christophe Beck

Sound Mixer

Peter J. Devlin

Costume Designer

Danny Glicker

©Paramount Pictures

Corporation

Production Companies

Paramount Pictures

and Skydance

Productions present
a Michaels/Goldwyn
production

An Anne Fletcher film

With the participation
of the State of
California and the
California Film
Commission

Executive Producers

Seth Rogen
Barbara Streisand

Mary McLaglen

Dan Fogelman

David Ellison

Dana Goldberg

Paul Schwake

Cast

Barbra Streisand
Joyce Brewster

Seth Rogen
Andrew Brewster

Brett Cullen

Ben Graw

Colin Hanks
Rob

Adam Scott
Andrew Margolis, Jr.

Miriam Margolyes

Anita

Kathy Najimy

Gayle

Nora Dunn

Amy

Yvonne Strahovski

Jessica

Dolby Digital/ Datasat

In Colour
[2.35:1]

Distributor

Paramount
Pictures UK

8,592 ft +0 frames

Newark, New Jersey, the present. Organic chemist Andy Brewster arrives home to spend a few days with widowed mother Joyce before travelling cross-country to pitch a non-toxic cleaning fluid he's invented to potential buyers. Joyce tells Andy that he was named after an old boyfriend for whom she still has strong feelings. Andy tracks down her ex's name and determines that he lives in San Francisco. To get Joyce there, Andy invites her to join him on his road trip.

Unsuccessful at selling his product and exasperated by Joyce's distracting presence during a pitch meeting, Andy yells at her in Amarillo, Texas. The pair reconcile and have dinner at a steakhouse, where Joyce meets businessman Ben, who asks her to go on a date with him in New York. In Las Vegas, Andy successfully presents his product to the Home Shopping Network. Joyce is hurt when she learns that he arranged the trip to reunite her with his namesake rather than just to spend time with her, but she forgives him. In San Francisco, they learn that her ex is dead but that his daughter was named after Joyce. Andy and Joyce say goodbye at the airport. As Joyce walks away, she calls Ben.

Hi-So

Thailand/Italy/Switzerland/The Netherlands 2010
Director: Aditya Assarat

Reviewed by Tony Rayns

Aditya Assarat's 'difficult' second feature is a rueful and obviously personal rumination on his own experience as a middle-class, foreign-educated Thai man. The film is divided into two nearly equal halves, each showing the protagonist Ananda in a failing relationship with a woman. In the first, he is joined in rural Thailand by Zoe, an Asian-American girlfriend he met when they were fellow students in San Francisco. But he's working (acting in a movie, something he's never done before) and she soon feels left out – because she doesn't speak Thai and finds herself a wallflower at the shoot, but also because Ananda seems much more Thai than he did in the US. In the second, a few months later, Ananda is in a new relationship in Bangkok with May, a Thai who works for the film's production company. But she, conversely, finds him too 'foreign' to make a satisfying partner and they begin to drift apart.

In narrative terms, that's all there is: quite a bit less than in Aditya's debut feature *Wonderful Town* (2007), which was similarly moody and similarly disinclined to spell out what the characters are thinking and feeling. Less, but this time the story's two parts and two settings offer Aditya more chances to cram in the allusive details he likes, not only contrasting Thailand's rural and urban economies but also implanting those tiny vignettes in which a line of dialogue or a physical gesture suggests something about someone's life. This approach is school-of-Antonioni, although Aditya probably picked up the aesthetic from Edward Yang. But he has clearly also looked at and learned from the films of Korean director Hong Sangsoo, from whom he borrows both the backstory about filmmaking and the idea of structuring the film in two halves which parallel and inversely reflect each other.

There's one direct nod to Hong Sangsoo: a scene with Ananda and Zoe in the first part is replicated almost exactly with Ananda and May in the second. (Both times, the girl asks the guy to read out a text in a language she doesn't understand, Thai the first time, English the second.) But the two halves are crisscrossed with correspondences, from the general (the ironic contrast between the tsunami-hit coast at Khao Lak, now fully restored, and the half-demolished apartment building which is the main setting in Bangkok) to the weirdly specific (near-identical shots in both halves of Ananda walking along a debris-strewn corridor, the first as an actor, the second as himself). But Aditya is much less interested than Hong in storytelling as a garden of forking paths. The narrative patterning actually means very little. Aditya's focus is squarely on the problem of dating when you have identity issues.

In the pressbook, Aditya writes about having 300 Facebook 'friends' with whom he has "more in common than the people who live down the street". The sense of not quite belonging is something he shares with his charismatic lead actor (and co-producer) Ananda Everingham – who has Australian-Laotian parentage, was raised in Thailand and has been a big star since he played the lead in the 2004 horror movie *Shutter*. The syndrome is anyway increasingly



Stuck in the middle: Ananda Everingham

common across East Asia, where many ancient cities have been 'developed' beyond recognition and the nouveau riche middle class likes to send its kids overseas for college. *Hi-So* (the title is the somewhat derisive Thai slang for 'High Society') offers no particular psychological insights into the syndrome; that would entail writing the kind of drama which seems 'uncool' to many directors of Aditya's generation. But his skilfully crafted images do succeed in defining moods of ennui and dislocation and are none the worse for echoing Antonioni and Yang.

If all this seems a little too self-absorbed, it's worth noting that Aditya also made a supplement to the feature in 2010: the

19-minute short *6 to 6*, shot in the same half-demolished Bangkok building and 'starring' three of the household servants who have small supporting roles in *Hi-So*. It was one of a group of shorts commissioned to mark a royal anniversary, and features a rendition of King Bhumibol's 'Never Mind the Hungry Men's Blues' on the soundtrack. This too is about a failing relationship (handyman Kaen seems to be losing interest in the maid Noi), but it's handled with delicacy, humour and warmth. It points up the best qualities of *Hi-So*: the nuanced attention to the way that offhand moments suggest larger truths. Let's hope it turns up as a bonus on the eventual DVD.

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Soros Sukhum
Aditya Assarat
Producer
Napassarin Prompila
Ananda Everingham
Written by
Aditya Assarat
Director of Photography
Umpornpol Yugala
Editor
Lee Chatametikoool
Art Director
Rasiguet Sookkarn
Original Music and Score
Shimizu Koichi
Desktop Error
Sound Designer
Akritchalern
Kalayanamitr
Costume Designer
Cattleya Paosrijaroen

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Production Companies
Spicy Disc presents in association with Halo Productions a Pop Pictures production
Funded by

TorinoFilmLab 2008
Additional Funding by Visions Sud Est with the support of SDC (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) and Office of Contemporary Art and Culture - Thailand
Ministry of Culture, Hubert Bals Fund - International Film Festival Rotterdam
A film by Aditya Assarat
Supported by Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum, Paris Project - Paris Cinema Film Festival, Pusan Promotion Plan - Pusan International Film Festival, Sundance Institute Feature Film Program - Sundance Film Festival
Executive Producers
Pichai Chirathivat

Cast
Ananda Everingham
Ananda
Cerise Leang
Zoe
Sajee Apiwong
May
Ploy Jindachot
Ploy
Louis Scott
Louis
Kongdej
Jaturanrasmee
Kongdej, director
Monaya Tharasak
Toh, assistant

Dolby Digital
In Colour
[1.85:1]
Subtitles

Distributor
Day for Night

Phang-nga, summer 2009. Chinese-American Zoe arrives in the coastal town of Khao Lak to visit Ananda, her boyfriend from college in San Francisco. Ananda is playing the lead in a movie, despite having no previous acting experience and tending to sound more like a foreigner than a Thai; he plays a man who lost his memory in the Thai tsunami. It's Zoe's first time in Thailand, and the language problem soon leaves her bored as she watches the shoot. Feeling increasingly distant from Ananda, Zoe invites herself to a birthday party for a member of hotel staff and next day – the eve of her departure – joins the concierge and his child on a motorcycle trip along the coast.

Bangkok, early 2010. The completed film is about to be released, and Ananda is in a new relationship with May, office manager at the production company. Ananda lives in an expensive apartment owned by his absent mother; he has moved to the ground floor from an upstairs apartment since one wing of the building was demolished to make way for a new road. May finds and sort-of adopts a stray dog she finds on the roof of the building; she finds several aspects of Ananda's life and attitudes puzzling, and feels very left out when she joins him on a night out with other foreign-educated friends. They have planned to spend Thai New Year together in Bangkok, but change their minds. Ananda leaves for the airport to take a trip.

The King of Pigs

Republic of Korea 2011
Director: Yeun Sang-ho



Bully for you: 'The King of Pigs'

Reviewed by Michael Brooke

The feature debut of South Korean animator Yeun Sang-ho, *The King of Pigs* is an often riveting but relentlessly grim experience. Given that it's about the long-term psychological impact of relentless bullying this is no surprise, but the nihilistic despair with which Yeun suffuses his material makes it far more *Lord of the Flies* than *Mean Girls*. Told mainly in flashback, the film opens with Kyung-min having just murdered his wife following a business

Credits and Synopsis

Producer
Cho Young-kag
Screenplay
Yeun Sang-ho
Editors
Yeun Sang-ho
Lee Yeun-jeong
Art Director
Woo Je-keun
Composer
Eom Been
Sound Supervisor
Lee Jun-bae

Production Companies
King of Pigs
Production
Committee

Co-production company: Studio Dadashow
Executive Producers
Park Jeong-hwan
Lee Eung-chul

Voice Cast

Yang Ik-june
Jung Jong-suk
Oh Jeong-se
Hwang Kyung-min
Kim Hye-na
Kim Chul
Kim Kkobbi
young Jung Jong-suk

Park Hee-von
young Hwang
Kyung-min

In Colour
[1.85:1]
Subtitles

Distributor
Terracotta
Distribution

Korean theatrical
title
Dwae-ji-ui wang

Onscreen English
subtitle
King of Pigs

South Korea, the present. After Kyung-min murders his wife following bankruptcy, he tracks down former classmate Jong-suk, who has beaten up his girlfriend Myung-mi over stress-induced jealousy. Kyung-min and Jong-suk pretend that they're successes in life.

At school, they were bullied relentlessly by Min and his fellow 'dogs' (students of greater social standing), who regarded them as 'pigs', although fellow 'pig' Chul defended them. When Jong-suk became the butt of homophobic graffiti after inadvertently wearing girls' jeans, Chul whipped the 'dogs' with his belt, gaining a fortnight's suspension. Kyung-min and Jong-suk visited Chul, who stabbed a cat and asked them to finish it off, before expounding his philosophy that to defeat bullies you have to be more evil than them. A new student, Chan-young, became a target of the 'dogs'. Chul returned to school, and beat Min so badly that he was given corporal punishment. After Chul's long-estranged father was found dead, he slashed one of the 'dogs' with a knife, and was expelled. He told Kyung-min and Jong-suk that he intended to commit suicide in public.

Back in the present, Kyung-min takes Jong-suk to the school rooftop from which Chul fell, and reveals that he conspired with Chul to fake his suicide, but saw Jong-suk pushing Chul off. Kyung-min admits his failures and jumps off himself. Horrified, Jong-suk rings Myung-mi with a tearful apology.

bankruptcy, while Jong-suk has beaten up his girlfriend in a fit of stress-induced jealousy. When the former classmates meet for the first time in 15 years, they pretend that they're successes, and similarly lie to themselves in the face of truths still too terrible to process.

The title refers to the way that their school lives were divided along unbridgeable social lines: William Golding-style 'pigs' like Kyung-min and Jong-suk are socially awkward introverts from poor families, while 'dogs' like Min are confident alpha males, albeit oppressed in turn by their own social superiors. Ironically, although classmate Chul is crowned 'king of pigs' for actually standing up to his tormentors, he's the one with the least to lose, something that vividly underpins his quasi-Nietzschean notion that the only way to conquer the evil of bullying is to become more evil in turn. He demonstrates this to his horrified classmates by stabbing a cat several times and urging them to follow suit – Jong-suk does so, but is subsequently tormented by the ghostly reappearance of the blood-drenched creature, grinning like its Cheshire counterpart and mocking his attempts at rationalising clearly intractable problems.

Subplots reveal that these hierarchies run throughout society in general: Jong-suk's sister shoplifts to keep up with her peers' flaunting of designer brands, while Chul's mother's pimp turns out to be the father of one of his classmates. After a promising new student is unpleasantly humiliated in the toilets, Jong-suk notes the way that people's body language changes after only a few days of torment: an awkwardly turned smile that tries but fails to suggest nonchalance.

The film was made for a comparatively low budget and the animation style is kept correspondingly simple (line-drawn characters against more elaborate backgrounds), though this stripped-down method suits the material. Some shots are almost entirely static aside from a single character's shoulder-wracking sobs, an approach that intensifies the violent moments, which are usually shockingly sudden. Kyung-min and Chul are also beset by hallucinations, in Chul's case self-induced by a glue-sniffing binge in an attempt to block out the real world's horrors. After 90-odd minutes of grinding oppression, Yeon tosses a tiny scrap to the shell-shocked viewer in the form of a faint glimmer of an upbeat ending, but by then it's scant comfort. ☹

The Last Stand

USA 2013
Director: Kim Jee-woon
Certificate 15 107m 3s

Reviewed by Kate Stables

There is apparently no such thing as a last action hero for Arnold Schwarzenegger, who returns to the screen after his gubernatorial detour in Kim Jee-woon's relentless romp, as a border-town sheriff prepared to stop a fugitive cartel boss escaping to Mexico. He's not alone in resuming a career in action cinema in his pensionable years. Sylvester Stallone has brought out *The Expendables* franchise and *Bullet to the Head*, and Bruce Willis is offering us *A Good Day to Die Hard*. What this signals, God only knows. A genre doubling back on itself? Or simply the industry's Pavlovian response to bulletproof formats and stars in tough times?

The Last Stand feels as 80s as Wham! and Reaganomics, a film that's long on violence and short on knowingness. It casts Schwarzenegger as a small town's saviour, but in his lesser-known Ordinary Joe mode, not seen since *Collateral Damage* (2002) and not traditionally his forte. Carefully calibrated around him are elements designed to widen the film's appeal beyond ageing Arniephiles – Johnny Knoxville as a deputised gun nut for the *Jackass* cohort, an ensemble of Latino/female/callow deputies in an attempt at diversity, and a Corvette ZR1 supercar for cartel boss Cortez to pull in the petrol-heads. The effect is as if the makers had put *Rio Bravo*, *The Fast and the Furious* and *Die Hard* in a blender, with a pinch of *High Noon*, and the results are crass but oddly compelling.

What holds it all together are the high-end action skills of director Kim, whose visceral set pieces are breathtakingly good, despite forsaking Korean ultra-violence for the homelier, all-American variety. Not that his fingerprints are all over it – there's none of the dark quirks or high style of *The Good, the Bad, the Weird* (2008) or *A Bittersweet Life* (2005). But a pair of eye-catching sequences – a sudden altered-state concentration on a villain reeling from a shot in the ear, a decelerated car chase through a field of thudding corncocks – register as welcome grace notes.

Nimble but predictable, the scripting and ensemble playing are strictly tailored to smooth the path of the action sequences. The humour is aimed at Schwarzenegger's age, rather than at his iconic persona. The "muscleman pregnant with sociological and semiotic significance", as Jose Arroyo dubbed him, radiates an oak-like endurance here as falls wind him ("How are you, Sheriff?" "Old") and reading glasses are vital for assessing bullet wounds. Weathered and unyielding rather than the indestructible Terminator of yore, he's a grizzled guardian not a superman. Slamming a police car into hired guns or striding grimly into the fray with a pumping shotgun, however, he gives off a sudden, jolting connection with his back catalogue. Rather like *Gran Torino* (2008), which recast Clint Eastwood as an elderly enforcer, the film positions Arnie as the rock against which all malefactors are broken.

Perhaps to compensate for Schwarzenegger's slowed pace, the film's show-car sequences are vertiginously fast, conducted with a jet roar as the Corvette outstrips choppers, police cars and SWAT teams in a screeching set of chases and crashes that worship speed but dodge any



Razing Arizona: Arnold Schwarzenegger

supra-real Xbox-aesthetic pitfalls. For the film's real fetish object is the gun. A movie consumed with love of firepower, *The Last Stand* is a parable illuminating a strand of American opinion that believes in the citizen's paramount need for weaponry. As the hapless FBI is outmanoeuvred at every turn by a fleet and cunning evil, the small town must defend itself when the State cannot, and they're going to need a lot of lead. Watching Ray and his deputies readying a vast range of weaponry from the illegal Dinkum Gun Museum you may feel a small bat-squeak of unease – amplified by the (empty) school bus they use to mount their Main Street defence. *The Last Stand* isn't just Arnold's second coming, it's a big fat valentine to the Second Amendment. ☹

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by

Lorenzo di Bonaventura

Written by

Andrew Knauer

Director of Photography

Ji Yong Kim

Edited by

Steven Kemper

Production Designer

Franco Carbone

Music

Mowg

Supervising Sound Editor

Victor Ray Ennis

Costume Designer

Michele Michel

Stunt Co-ordinator

Darrian Prescott

©Lions Gate Films Inc.

Production Companies

Lionsgate presents a Lionsgate/

Di Bonaventura

Pictures production

A Kim Jee-woon film

Executive Producers

Guy Riedel

Miky Lee

Edward Fee

Michael Paseornek

Mike Figueroa

Eduardo Noriega

Gabriel Cortez

Peter Stormare

Burrell

Zach Gilford

Jerry Bailey

Genesis Rodriguez

Agent Ellen Richards

Daniel Henney

Agent Phil Hayes

John Patrick

Amedori

Agent Mitchell

Lore

Germany/Australia/United Kingdom 2012

Director: Cate Shortland

Certificate 15 109m 3s

Reviewed by Roger Clarke

Adapted from a self-contained story in Rachel Seiffert's 2001 book *Dark Room* and set in Germany immediately after WWII, *Lore* follows the eponymous Hannelore as she guides her four younger siblings to the safety of their grandmother's house. This involves a perilous trek across 500 miles of mountains and forests and it's a journey littered with death, hunger and predation. A well-rotted anarchy stalks the land: Germans still clinging to Nazi ideology have almost the air of the walking dead about them, for all the light late-summer beauty of the woodland glades.

The second feature from Australian director Cate Shortland, who had some success with *Somersault* in 2004, *Lore* is a akin to a bourgeois German version of Elem Klimov's 1985 Belarus-set *Come and See*, and it has some outstanding features. The star turn is the lurking cinematography of Adam Arkapaw (*Animal Kingdom*), which is mostly handheld, its palette varying according to Lore's state of mind. Saskia Rosendahl gives a memorable performance in the lead, depicting an Aryan teenager completely out of her depth and unwilling to surrender her devotion to Nazism. As a further complication, just as she's having to play nursemaid to her younger siblings she is also awkwardly becoming aware of her own sexuality. This arrives in the ambiguous form of refugee Thomas, played by Kai Malina, who holds Jewish travel papers (which may or may not be his). In another scene, a hideous and much older man grabs Lore's ostensibly fresh and virginal body only to exclaim with horror: "You smell like death!" When finally Lore sees pictures of the Holocaust posted in a public place and notices that one of the presiding officers looks much like her father, we realise



Unrepentant: Saskia Rosendahl

that death does indeed hang very close to her.

There are no obvious signs that Lore has learnt any moral lessons from the journey, and no redemption is offered by the film. That Lore allows Thomas to be arrested, after all he has done to protect her, is just one of a series of equivocations. When Lore and her siblings finally arrive at their grandmother's house on the coast after having seen the worst of humanity, their grandmother, acting as if nothing has happened, tells them to behave at the dinner table. At this point Lore smashes the beloved china trinket that she's carefully kept from harm all the way there. Baader-Meinhof here we come.

There's a great deal of sound texture in the film – sometimes heavy string music, sometimes something more nuanced, modern and lighter. There's an avoidance of the great cathartic moments so common with this subject, which not everyone will like. But the film's qualities are subtler and more explored; avoiding the excoriating horror of *Come and See*, it instead paints a sylvan, shifting dreamscape that perfectly exemplifies its often surreal exposition. ☹

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by

Karsten Stöter

Liz Watts

Paul Welsh

Benny Drechsel

Written by

Cate Shortland

Robin Mukherjee

Based on the novel

The Dark Room by

Rachel Seiffert

Cinematographer

Adam Arkapaw

Editor

Veronika Jenet

Production Designer

Silke Fischer

Composer

Max Richter

Sound Designer

Sam Petty

Costume Designer

Stefanie Bieker

©Rohfilm GmbH, Lore

Holdings Pty Limited,

Screen Australia,

Creative Scotland

and Screen NSW

Production Companies

Screen Australia,

Mitteldeutsche

Medienförderung,

Hessen Invest Film,

ilmförderungsanstalt,

Deutscher

Filmförderfonds,

Hamburg Schleswig-

Holstein, Medien- und

Filmgesellschaft

Baden-Württemberg

present in association

with Screen NSW,

Creative Scotland a

Rohfilm, Porchlight

Films, Edge City

Films production

Made with the

support of the

UK Film Council's

Development Fund

Developed with

support from the

MEDIA Programme of

the European Union &

supported by the 121

Media Programme of

the European Union

Developed through

the Eave Programme

Financed in

association with

NSW Government,

Screen NSW

Supported by the

National Lottery

through Creative

Scotland

Financed in

association

with Fulcrum

Media Finance,

Commerzbank

Financed with

the assistance

of Filmförderung

Hamburg

Schleswig-Holstein,

Filmförderung Baden

Württemberg, FFA -

ilmförderungsanstalt,

Deutscher

Filmförderfonds,

Mitteldeutsche

Medienförderung,

Hessen Invest Film

Developed and

financed with the

assistance of the

Australia Government,

Screen Australia

Executive Producers

Margaret Matheson

Vincent Sheehan

Anita Sheehan

Cast

Saskia Rosendahl

Hannelore, 'Lore'

Kai Malina

Thomas

Nele Trebs

Liesel

Ursina Lardi

mum

Hans Jochen-

Wagner

dad

Mike Seidel

Jürgen

André Frid

Günter

Eva-Maria Hagen

gran

Mike Weidner

young German soldier

Nick Leander

Holaschke

baby Peter

Sven Pippig

farmer

Philip Wiegatz

Helmut

Nevada, present day. An armed gang springs cartel boss Gabriel Cortez from an FBI convoy. Cortez flees Las Vegas in a stolen 'supercar', taking FBI agent Ellen Richards hostage. In Arizona, small-town sheriff Ray Owens's deputy is killed in a gun battle with a gang of Cortez's men who are building an assault bridge across a narrow canyon bordering Mexico. Cortez and his gunmen outrun the FBI. Ellen is revealed to be in league with Cortez. Owens determines to stop Cortez escaping into Mexico, and recruits local gun nut Lewis and ex-soldier Frank. The crew from the canyon launch an assault on Ray's blockade but are cut down in a series of sniper attacks and shootouts. Cortez ditches Ellen and escapes through the shattered roadblock. Ray gives chase in a show car. Cortez reaches the bridge but Ray captures him after a fight and presents him to the waiting FBI.

Germany, 1945. Allied forces are sweeping the countryside, looking for war criminals. There is panic in the bourgeois household of a senior Nazi officer. The officer burns SS files; shortly afterwards he and his wife are arrested. Their eldest daughter Hannelore – 'Lore' – is left to care for her four siblings. Lore realises that she must lead them hundreds of miles to the coast, to the sanctuary of their grandmother's house. She continues to believe unwaveringly in Nazism. Along the way she befriends Thomas, a young Jewish refugee who tells

suspicious American soldiers that Lore and her siblings are part of his family. Lore witnesses great brutality, madness, suicide and sexual predation, and one of her brothers is shot dead by Russians. When another brother steals Thomas's papers, the latter is arrested – Lore does nothing to help him. She seems impervious to the horrors she has experienced – until finally arriving at her grandmother's house. Told to behave at table, Lore smashes the china figurine that she has assiduously protected from harm along the way.

Mama

Canada/Spain/USA 2013
Director: Andy Muschietti
Certificate 15 100m 2s

Reviewed by Leah Churner

Parenting chillers are only fun when spiked with a splash of grown-up juice – think *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) or *Orphan* (2009). *Mama*, a sober story about the menacing 'imaginary' friend of two orphaned sisters, is a chore. Written and directed by Argentine brother-and-sister filmmaking team Andy and Barbara Muschietti and based on their 2008 short of the same name, *Mama* adheres to the oldest rule in the horror playbook: stick a camera on a tripod and train it on a closet door long enough, and the image becomes scary.


Pan's Labyrinth director Guillermo del Toro took note of the Muschiettis' 2008 short at a festival screening and encouraged them to expand it into a feature – *Mama* is the third in a series of directorial debuts bearing del Toro's producing imprimatur, following Juan Antonio Bayona's *The Orphanage* (2007) and Troy Nixey's *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark* (2010). The result is a film that's been lauded by a number of serious critics for its lack of gross-out gore (evidently standards for the genre have fallen so low that not inducing dry heaves is now a virtue). Its star, Jessica Chastain, is already pulling in major box office for her Oscar-nominated lead in *Zero Dark Thirty* – presently, you'll see Chastain on multiple screens at the multiplex. But whereas in Kathryn Bigelow's film she's a rebel who stares down the American military and the very Taliban, here she's a rebel who wears black nail polish and eats cereal in the afternoon. With her drawn-on tattoos, Misfits T-shirt and awkwardly dangling electric bass, Chastain looks like she's wearing a Halloween costume. Still, she earns her keep, appearing in nearly every scene as rock musician Annabel, the accidental guardian of spooky, disturbed orphans (played by Megan Charpentier and Isabelle Nélisse), and the nemesis of the ghost they believe to be their mom. Nikolaj Coster-Waldau (*Game of Thrones*) co-stars as both Annabel's boyfriend



You're my beast friend: Megan Charpentier

Lucas, the uncle of the orphaned girls, and their homicidal dad. Daniel Kash plays Dr Dreyfuss, a paediatric shrink who, instead of treating the children's problems, charges off to the municipal archives to research the original identity of the ghost – an inmate at a 19th-century asylum.

In the wake of Bigelow's film, it's impossible not to be depressed to see Chastain infantilised here as a woman whose lack of interest in childbearing and child-rearing is her defining flaw – though the Muschiettis' alternative to barrenness is a leeching beast who has a face like ET and leaves clumps of hair everywhere she goes. (It's worth noting that *Mama* was played by a man, Javier Botet, before the computer effects were added.)

Expanding their three-minute short into a feature about a four-woman household, you'd think the Muschiettis might have found time for the specific perils of mother-daughter relationships – passive aggression, boundary issues, narcissistic envy and so on. But no. Instead of psychological insight, we're treated to deafening musical cues, vertiginous crane shots and a sausage dog called Handsome, intermittently trotted out for comic relief. 

Mea Maxima Culpa:

Silence in the House of God

USA/Ireland 2012, Director: Alex Gibney
Certificate 15 106m 48s

Reviewed by Philip Kemp

In *Taxi to the Dark Side* (2007) documentarist Alex Gibney started out with a microcosm – the death in custody of a single suspect at Bagram airbase in Afghanistan – and steadily widened out to take in a culture of complicity in torture, and public denial of that complicity, which extended into the highest levels of the Bush administration. Gibney adopts a parallel narrative pattern in *Mea Maxima Culpa*, taking as his starting point four former pupils at the St John's School for the Deaf in Milwaukee trying to alert the Church authorities to the abuse they suffered at the hands of the school's director, Father Lawrence Murphy. From here he gradually widens his focus to show how evidence of similar cases in countries around the world was at first suppressed, then angrily denied, and finally reluctantly and patchily admitted by the Vatican.

We've been here before, of course – in Amy Berg's similarly themed *Deliver Us from Evil* (2006), for instance. But there's an added level of repugnance about Murphy's crimes, in that these were deaf kids, all the more isolated and vulnerable, often with non-deaf parents who didn't know signing – so that Murphy, who wasn't deaf but could sign, served as their only channel of communication. Behind him loomed the monolithic power of the Catholic Church, presenting a united front of sanctimony and outrage in the face of allegations, making its accusers feel guilty and ashamed and, with its insistence on priestly celibacy, creating a perfect forcing ground for abusers of this stamp. In the words of Richard Sipe, a former Benedictine monk and mental-health counsellor: "The system of the Catholic clergy... selects, cultivates, protects, defends and produces sexual abusers."

As several participants in the film observe, even when Church authorities finally concede that abuse has taken place, it seems their prime response is always to lament that a Catholic priest should have transgressed so woefully, rather than to express any compassion or contrition towards the victims. In the wake of the arrest of the Irish cleric Father Tony Walsh, known to the Church authorities for 20 years as a serial abuser (and one of the very few priests to stand trial for the offence), we see his boss Desmond Connell, the then Archbishop of Dublin, asked why he never thought to visit or even contact any of those Walsh abused. Connell's wet-eyed response, breathtaking in its inadequacy, is: "I suppose I should have done – but I've so much to do."

As in *Taxi* and his other documentaries, Gibney piles up the evidence with scrupulously detailed research, always keeping himself behind the camera. The film's only weakness is the frequent reconstructions of the St John's abuse scenes, presented like clips from horror movies with insidious music and blood-red backlighting. It's also slightly disconcerting to have the signers' 'words' spoken in the familiar tones of John Slattery, Ethan Hawke, Chris Cooper et al; subtitles might have worked better. But these are minor flaws in a film that meticulously assembles an impressive range of evidence, including interviews, documents, photographs and home

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
J. Miles Dale
Barbara Muschietti
Screenplay
Neil Cross
Andy Muschietti
Barbara Muschietti
Story
Andy Muschietti
Barbara Muschietti
Director of Photography
Antonio Riestra
Editor
Michele Conroy
Production Designer
Anastasia Masaro

Music
Fernando Velázquez
Production Sound Mixer
Kelly Wright
Costume Designer
Luis Sequeira

©De Milo Productions
(Mama) Inc. and
Toma 78 S.L.
Production Companies
Universal Pictures
and Guillermo del
Toro present a
De Milo/Toma 78

production of a film
by Andy Muschietti
Produced in
association with
The Movie Network,
Movie Central
With the participation
of CAVCO - Canadian
Audio-Visual
Certification Office
and OMDC - Ontario
Media Development
Corporation
With the support of
ICAA - Instituto de
Cinematografía y
Artes Audiovisuales

With the collaboration
of ICEC - Institut
Català de les
Empreses Culturals
Executive Producer
Guillermo del Toro
Film Extracts
Silent Running (1971)

Cast

Jessica Chastain
Annabel
Nikolaj Coster-
Waldau
Lucas/Jeffrey
Megan Charpentier

Victoria
Isabelle Nélisse
Lilly
Daniel Kash
Dr Dreyfuss
Javier Botet
mama
Jane Moffat
Jean Podolski
Morgan McGarry
young Victoria
David Fox
Burnsie
Domenic Cuzzocrea
Ron
Chris Marren
cop

Julie Chantrey
Nina

Dolby Digital/
Dolby Atmos/
Datasat/SDDS
In Colour
[1.85:1]

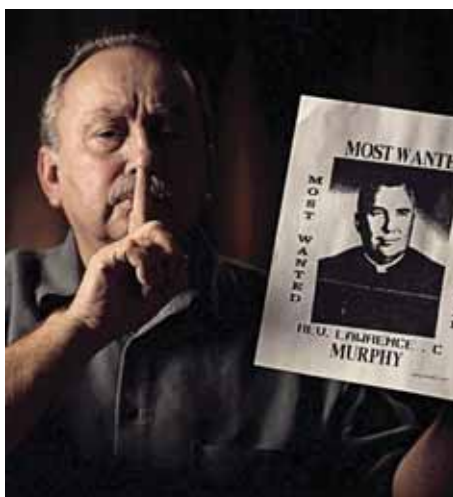
Distributor
Universal Pictures
International
UK & Ire

9,003 ft +0 frames

Richmond, Virginia, the recent past. Distraught because of financial problems, businessman Jeffrey kills his wife and takes his daughters, three-year-old Victoria and one-year-old Lilly, to a cabin in the woods, planning to kill them too and then commit suicide. However, a mysterious presence drags him away before he can harm the girls.

Five years later, the girls are discovered in the cabin, filthy, crawling on all fours, and with a seemingly imaginary friend they call 'Mama'. Rescued, they are cared for by their uncle Lucas and his girlfriend Annabel, a rock musician. Psychologist Dr Dreyfuss offers to accommodate them in a 'research house'

fitted with surveillance cameras. He puzzles over the girls' bizarre behaviour and concludes that Mama is the ghost of a woman who ran away from a mental institution many years ago and committed suicide after being separated from her child. Lucas is attacked by Mama and falls into a coma. Annabel, reluctantly left in charge, bonds with Victoria, though Lilly still prefers Mama. Dreyfuss is killed while investigating the cabin in the woods. Lucas regains consciousness. A jealous Mama snatches the girls and is about to jump with them over a cliff when Annabel and Lucas intervene. After a struggle, Annabel saves Victoria, but Lilly chooses to stay with Mama – they jump from the cliff.



Seeking justice: 'Mea Maxima Culpa'

movies, to paint a devastating picture of an institution still, even after all the revelations and some \$2 billion paid out in damages, far too fixated on its own supposed sanctity. Ⓢ

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by

Todd Wider
Jedd Wider

Producers

Alex Gibney
Alexandra Johns
Kristen Vaurio

Written by

Alex Gibney
Director of

Photography

Lisa Rinzier
Editor

Original Music

Ivor Guest
Robert Logan
Sound Recordist
David Hocs

©Mea Culpa
productions, LLC
Production

Companies

A Jigsaw production
In association
with Wider Film
Projects and Below
the Radar Films
A film by Alex Gibney
Produced with
the participation
of Bord Scannán
na hÉireann/
Irish Film Board
Executive
Producers
Lori Singer
Jessica Kingdon

Voice Cast

Jamie Sheridan
Terry
Chris Cooper
Gary

Ethan Hawke

Pat
John Slattery
Arthur

narrator
Alex Gibney

In Colour
[1.85:1]

Distributor
Element Pictures
Distribution

9,612ft +0 frames

No

Chile/USA/France/Mexico 2012

Director: Pablo Larraín

Certificate 15 117m 43s

Reviewed by Demetrios Matheou

When Pablo Larraín's second feature, *Tony Manero*, was released in 2008, it was a bolt from the blue, a rare film about Chile's dictatorship from an industry still shy of the subject, made by a director who was only 12 when the regime ended. Yet here he was, sticking a discomforting probe into the old wound.

He didn't stop there. Four years later, Larraín has completed a diverse and extremely accomplished trilogy on the Pinochet era. With *Tony Manero* he presented a surreal perspective on life in the thick of repression; in *Post Mortem* (2010) he cast back to the regime's beginning, the coup itself; and now, with *No*, he looks to its unexpected demise. In keeping with the more upbeat theme, this is the closest yet that Larraín has made to a crowd-pleasing movie and as such it bears an interesting resemblance to Ben Affleck's recent *Argo*, which focused on the little-known story behind the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis; drawing considerable humour from the outlandish subplots of history, both are exemplars of politically engaged yet feelgood filmmaking.

Larraín recognises that Pinochet laid the seeds for his own downfall when he brought market-driven economics and their social ramifications to Chile. When we first meet the film's central character, ad executive René Saavedra (Gael García Bernal), he is pitching a TV commercial for a soft drink called, with brilliant irony, Free. Whether he's selling pop, microwaves or a new soap opera, René opens a pitch in the same way, explaining that it is "in line with the current social context" and that "today, Chile thinks of its future". His cynicism applies to his private life: when he wants to get a kiss out of his radical ex-wife, he simply utters the word "Allende". Don Draper might have sharper suits, but René's lack of scruple would make the *Mad Men* proud.

The No campaigners who seek René's

help in the run-up to the 1988 referendum want to speak of murder, torture, exile and poverty. They're horrified when René insists that the country's misery "won't sell". The genius of the campaign he devises is that it applies the traditionally frivolous tools of advertising – jingles, song-and-dance numbers, comedy – to overthrow a dictator.

Not that the skateboarding René (he is an amalgam of two real-life figures who were instrumental in the 1988 campaign) is an easy person to read. It's tempting to believe that this son of a dissident, once exiled himself, has chosen apathy as an escape from a painful past, and has now found his better political instincts aroused by the No campaign; yet we're never quite sure whether René's motivations run deeper than a professional's love of a challenge. The casting of Bernal is astute: the poster boy for Latin American cinema sweetens the pill of another story about the dictatorship while mining the ambiguities of his character and so keeping the film honest.

Adapting the stage play *Referendum*, Pedro Peirano, who co-scripted the fabulous 2009 black comedy *The Maid*, provides another subtle, dense, playful screenplay. In keeping with the sheer jolliness of the No campaign (and as if applying René's maxim, "a little lighter, a little nicer"), his comic tone is less twisted, much less dark than in Larraín's earlier films. At the same time, we're left in no doubt as to what is at stake. People are constantly speaking in whispers; René and his colleagues are stalked by men in unmarked cars; René's home is broken into. The very presence of Alfredo Castro, who played the sinister lead characters of *Tony Manero* and *Post Mortem* and who is firmly in the Yes camp here, reminds us of the world the No campaigners wish to escape. Much of the upbeat vibe is due to our witnessing a country coming out of the shadows.

In a stylistic masterstroke, Larraín



Protest vote: Gael García Bernal

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1972. Terry Kohut, a former pupil of the St John's School for the Deaf, writes to Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Dean of the College of Cardinals in the Vatican, telling him how he and other deaf boys were sexually abused by Father Lawrence Murphy, the school's director, and asking him to inform the Pope. He receives no reply. Over the next 30 years Terry and three fellow ex-pupils – Gary Smith, Pat Kuehn and Arthur Budzinski – try to alert Church and civil authorities to what happened. They're repeatedly blocked but persist, going so far as to hand out 'Wanted' posters with Murphy's picture on them.

Gradually, as other cases of priestly abuse in America and in Europe come to light, the Church authorities are forced to take notice. The case of the St John's pupils is supported by figures both within and outside the Catholic Church attempting to break down the Vatican's conspiracy of silence. Murphy is induced to retire from the school 'on health grounds', though continuing to act as a parish priest elsewhere in Wisconsin. The film traces how awareness of widespread abuse percolated upwards through the Church hierarchy, probably reaching Pope John Paul II and certainly the present Pope who, as Cardinal Ratzinger, had required all such cases to be reported to him. But even now action is taken rarely and reluctantly.

and his regular cinematographer Sergio Armstrong shot the film with a 1983 U-matic video camera, leaving little difference between the archive footage and the new material. This, along with the excellent production design, results in a near-seamless stylistic whole that draws us into the period. More complex is the use of real figures from the campaign, notably its anchorman, playing themselves; we see them as they prepare for René's cameras – before Larraín cuts to actual broadcasts featuring their younger selves. As well as allowing a homage to these protagonists, the device denotes the film's artifice and, by extension, the artifice at play on both sides of the campaign.

Larraín's contemporary perspective ensures that the happy ending is not unconditional. René's ambiguous response to the victory, his return to Guzmán, remind us that Chile's problems – the economic, social and cultural consequences of Pinochet's rule – did not end overnight. But for now the director allows his compatriots to bask in some remembered sunshine. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by Juan de Dios Larraín Daniel Marc Dreifuss	Companies With the support of Programa Ibermedia, Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes, Corfo Participant Media present in association with Funny Balloons and Fabula Mexican co- producer: Canana	Antonia Zegers Verónica Caravajal Marcial Tagle Costa Néstor Cantillana Arancibia Jaime Vadell minister Pascal Montero Simon
Screenplay Pedro Peirano Based on the play <i>Referendum</i> by Antonio Skarmeta	Executive Producers Jonathan King Jeff Skoll	Dolby Digital In Colour and Black and White [1.33:1] Subtitles
Director of Photography Sergio Armstrong	Cast Gael García Bernal René Saavedra Alfredo Castro Luis Guzmán, 'Lucho' Luis Gnecco Urrutia	Distributor Network Releasing
Film Editor Andrea Chignoli		10,594 ft +8 frames
Production Designer Estefanía Larraín		
Music Carlos Cabezas		
Sound Design Miguel Hormazabal		
Costume Designer Francisca Román		
©[no company given] Production		

In 1988, after 15 years in power, the Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet succumbs to international pressure to legitimise his presidency and declares a referendum on whether he should retain power for another eight years. For the first time since the coup against Salvador Allende, opponents are permitted to air their views and put the case for the No vote.

The opposition parties enlist successful adman René Saavedra to shape their nightly television campaign. Assuming that corruption and the 'learnt hopelessness' of voters will ensure failure, their ambitions are limited to raising awareness of the dictatorship's human-rights abuses. René disagrees, insisting that victory is possible and that they should take an upbeat approach, with the theme "happiness is coming". René's involvement in the referendum angers his boss at the ad agency, Lucho Guzmán, who is advising Pinochet's campaign. René's estranged wife Veronica, a radical activist, belittles his participation in what she believes is Pinochet's fraudulent gesture of democracy. The No campaigners are constantly watched and intimidated. On the day of the vote, police violently disrupt their street parades. Nevertheless, they win. As Pinochet hands over power, René returns to his job with Guzmán.

Parental Guidance

USA 2012

Director: Andy Fickman

Certificate U 104m 40s

Reviewed by Anna Smith

Perhaps the movie-related title is a clue, but *Parental Guidance* feels too self-consciously showbiz to appeal to your average cinemagoing family. Simply on visual terms, Billy Crystal and Bette Midler's couple Artie and Diane are hardly your typical grandparents, and their conservative parenting views while on babysitting duty for their daughter Alice seem at odds with their former careers (sports reporter and weather girl). The most bearable moments are when the script acknowledges the performers' real-life talents and allows them to perform a song-and-dance number or lets Crystal ad-lib.

Elsewhere this is a war cry against 'helicopter parents': Artie and Diane's methods ultimately work better than those of the progressive Alice – and Artie even draws applause after a pro-spanking speech at a music concert.

There's potential in the idea of old versus new but director Andy Fickman (*She's the Man*) makes little use of it with a plodding pace and a reliance on toilet humour and weak physical farce, failing to balance these with sufficiently sophisticated humour. When Alice warns her children, "Grandpa says loads of jokes you won't get," she might as well be talking to the audience as a whole. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by Billy Crystal Peter Chernin Dylan Clark Written by Lisa Addario Joe Syracuse Director of Photography Dean Semler Film Editor Kent Beyda Production Designer David J. Bomba Music Marc Shaiman Production Sound Mixer Jeff Wexler Costume Designer Genevieve Tyrrell	Century Fox Film Corporation, Walden Media, LLC and Dune Entertainment III LLC (in Brazil, Italy, Japan, Korea and Spain) Production Companies Twentieth Century Fox and Walden Media present a Chernin Entertainment/Face Productions, Inc. production Made in association with Dune Entertainment Executive Producer Kevin Halloran	Barker Simmons Jennifer Crystal Foley Cassandra Rhoda Griffiths Dr Schveer Geddie Watanabe Mr Cheng Dolby Digital/ SDDS/Datasat In Colour [1.85:1] Distributor 20th Century Fox International (UK) 9,420 ft +0 frames
©Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, Walden Media, LLC and Dune Entertainment III LLC (in all territories except Brazil, Italy, Japan, Korea and Spain) ©TCF Hungary Film Rights Exploitation Limited Liability Company, Twentieth	Cast Billy Crystal Artie Decker Bette Midler Diane Decker Marisa Tomei Alice Simmons Tom Everett Scott Phil Simmons Bailee Madison Harper Simmons Kyle Harrison Breitkopf	

Atlanta, US, the present. Phil invites wife Alice to join him on a business trip. Alice asks her parents, Artie and Diane, to look after their three children. Artie and Diane are challenged by their daughter's rules about everything from behaviour to diet – including her indulgence of son Barker's imaginary friend Carl. While under Artie's supervision, Barker urinates on a skateboarding ramp and a clip of it makes the news. Angry, Alice and Phil return and take issue with many of Artie and Diane's decisions. However, Barker claims that Carl has been killed; Phil thinks Artie's influence has helped Barker move on from his fantasy. The family bonds; Artie and Diane become a regular fixture in Alice's family's life.

Parker

USA 2012

Director: Taylor Hackford

Certificate 15 118m 18s

Reviewed by Matthew Taylor

Once asked if he could imagine an actor who might most suitably embody Parker, his relentless underworld antihero of some 24 novels written under the Richard Stark pseudonym, the late Donald E. Westlake suggested Jack Palance – "because you knew Palance wasn't faking it, and Parker wasn't faking it either". Palance never got the gig, but the character with a face like "a chipped chunk of concrete" has had some notably variable screen incarnations. If Lee Marvin's 'Walker' in *Point Blank* is the most seminal, lagging behind are Robert Duvall (*The Outfit*), Mel Gibson (*Payback*), Jim Brown (*The Split*) and, most radically, Anna Karina (in Godard's *Made in USA*). Taylor Hackford's forthright revision, the sole adaptation to retain the character's original name, casts Jason Statham – conceivably an easy fit; while hardly a versatile actor, Statham has the blank, laconic (but professional) death-dealer credentials down pat.

Loosely based on *Flashfire*, the 19th novel in the series, *Parker* reaffirms Westlake's tendency to recycle bruising set-ups with minor variations – usually involving his eponymous criminal being brutally betrayed by venal associates and seeking recompense. Thus, after a well-sustained opening heist sequence at the Ohio State Fair, Statham's wary Parker is discarded and left for dead when he snubs the demand of mob-connected crook Melander (Michael Chiklis) that he stick around for another, bigger job. Statham's weary nonchalance might not hold a candle to Marvin's seething grit, but it adds a layer of gallows humour: this is probably the umpteenth time he's suffered a similar outrage. John J. McLaughlin's screenplay has also softened Parker's edges, endowing him with a rather hackneyed code of honour. Indeed, the first time we see him he's disguised as a priest, methodically calming down a hyperventilating security guard.

When Parker follows Melander's trail down south, and the film incorporates Florida, Jennifer Lopez's Leslie Rodgers and an elaborate jewel theft, it's hard not to recall that other prolific crime author, Elmore Leonard. Lopez memorably starred in Steven Soderbergh's 1998 Leonard adaptation *Out of Sight* – here, her role suggests a topsy-turvy mirror image of the one before. In Soderbergh's movie, Lopez was a no-nonsense US marshal with a cool dad, pined after by a DEA agent. *Parker's* Leslie, on the other hand, is a frazzled, debt-crippled real-estate agent with a scornful mother and a beat cop admirer. Possibly conscious of the parallels, Hackford loosens the hitherto breakneck pace in this section, as stultified Leslie quickly comes round to the idea of the fast money to be made in Parker's cutthroat world.

Unlike John Boorman in *Point Blank*, or even Brian Helgeland in *Payback*, Hackford isn't too concerned with forging a stylish veneer in *Parker*. He's more interested in getting from plot point A to plot point B, from one violent confrontation to the next, with a minimum of fuss. In a sense, this complements Westlake's stripped-down prose – it also leaves the film short on individual flavour. Statham's action



Back to basics: Lopez, Statham

chops are well utilised in a number of bone-crunching skirmishes, but a solid supporting cast – including Nick Nolte, Wendell Pierce and Clifton Collins Jr – is underused. It may be one of the least distinctive Westlake adaptations to date, yet *Parker* is still proficient pulp. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by

Les Alexander
Jonathan Mitchell
Steven Chasman
Taylor Hackford
Sidney Kimmel
Matthew Roland

Screenplay

John J. McLaughlin
Based on the novel
Flashfire by Richard
Stark [i.e., Donald
E. Westlake]

Cinematographer

J. Michael Muro

Edited by

Mark Warner

Production Designer

Missy Stewart

Music

David Buckley

Supervising Sound Editors

Gregg Baxter
Myron Nettinga

Costume Designer

Melissa Bruning

Stunt Co-ordinator

Mike Massa

Production Companies

Incentive Filmed
Entertainment and
Sierra Pictures
present an
Alexander/Mitchell
production

A Current

Entertainment
production

A Sidney Kimmel

Entertainment
production

In association

with Anvil Films

A Taylor

Hackford film

Executive Producers

Stratton Leopold
Peter Schlessel

Brad Luff

Clint Kisker
Bruce Toll

Nick Meyer

Marc Shaberg

Cast

Jason Statham

Parker

Jennifer Lopez

Leslie Rodgers

Michael Chiklis

Melander

Wendell Pierce

Carlson

Clifton Collins Jr

Ross

Bobby Cannavale

Jake Fernandez

Patti Lupone

Ascension

Carlos Carrasco

Norte

Micah Hauptman

August Hardwicke

Emma Booth

Claire

Nick Nolte

Hurley

Kip Gilman

Danzinger

Dolby Digital/

Datasat

In Colour

[2.35:1]

Distributor

E1 Films

10,647 ft +0 frames

US, the present. Accompanying a new crew, career criminal Parker successfully oversees a robbery at the Ohio State Fair. The crew's boss, Melander, demands that Parker join them for a bigger job. When Parker refuses, he is shot and left for dead. Having survived, Parker learns from contact Hurley – father of Parker's lover Claire – that Melander's crew have dangerous connections to Chicago mobster Danzinger. Finding out that Parker is alive, Danzinger sends an assassin to kill Claire, who escapes. After Parker kills further emissaries, Melander fails to placate him with his cut from Ohio. Parker follows Melander's trail to Palm Beach, Florida. Posing as a playboy house-hunter, he enlists the help of real-estate agent Leslie Rodgers to identify the hideout where Melander's crew are planning their next job. Leslie sees through Parker's alias but, after assuring him that she isn't an undercover cop, offers her alliance. Parker is forced to lie low at Leslie's home when his execution of a hitman attracts the attention of the police. After Melander's gang carry out a jewel heist, Parker follows them back to the hideout but finds Leslie taken hostage. Parker kills the gang and takes the loot. Reuniting with Claire, Parker promises Leslie a cut of the riches. Six months later, Parker assassinates Danzinger. A year later, Leslie finds her cut in the mail.

Reign of Assassins

People's Republic of China 2010

Director: Su Chao-Pin

Certificate: not submitted 103m

Reviewed by Tony Rayns

Sometimes a film's credits sound an alarm. When the caption "Written and directed by Su Chao-Pin" is preceded by a caption reading "Co-directed by John Woo", many will suspect that there was trouble during production – especially when no fewer than five cinematographers are credited moments later. The official version is that John Woo was present throughout the shoot as one of the producers, and earned his extra credit by working on the action scenes. But the finished film is so clunky in action choreography and drama, so ill-judged in its rehash of generic clichés, in short so stupendously boring, it's hard not to believe that there's a secret history to be told.

Reign of Assassins (the Chinese title *Jian Yü* simply means 'Sword, Rain') was conceived as a vehicle for Michelle Yeoh, a longtime star of kung fu and *wuxia* movies who by 2010 – ten years after *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* – was reportedly unsure that she could still cut it in the genre; Aung San Suu Kyi and Luc Besson were just around the corner. Su Chao-Pin had made the most spectacular of debuts in 2000 as the writer of Chen Yiwen's dark romcom *The Cabbie*, one of the best 'undiscovered' films of that decade, and then a less sure-footed debut as a director with the 2002 comedy *Better Than Sex*. He went on to write hits in various genres for other directors in his native Taiwan, so it's not surprising that John Woo and Terence Chang (now based in Beijing) invited him to come up with a *wuxia* script.

Probably because *Crouching Tiger* had looked back to the novels of Jin Yong and the films of King Hu for inspiration, Su and his producers turned instead to the novels of Gu Long for theirs. Gu Long's work in the genre is synonymous with convoluted plotting, secret identities, cod philosophy, sexual confusions and baroque weaponry and martial techniques. Chu Yuan



Killer queen: Michelle Yeoh

adapted many of Gu's novels at Shaw Brothers in the 1970s, definitively in *The Magic Blade* (1976). All of the main traits of Gu's fiction are present in Su's script here, minus the suspense, the mystery, the credible emotion and the satisfaction of a well-rounded plot. The storytelling is so lacunary and the pace so breakneck that it's easy to guess why the film is now shorter than the 117 minutes it ran at its Venice premiere.

The action scenes are wire-assisted and fast-cut in the Tsui Hark style, but garbled in the editing; it's impossible to keep track of who's where or even who's slicing who. Yeoh and Korean star Jung Woosung are likeable enough as the married couple with new faces who discover that they're actually mortal enemies, but none of the Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese stalwarts around them is given anything interesting to act. Best in show is Wang Xueqi (in a previous life, the soldier in *Yellow Earth*) as the chief villain, a court eunuch who is desperate to regrow his long-lost penis. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Co-directed by

John Woo

Produced by

John Woo

Terence Chang

Written by

Chao-Pin Su

Director of Photography

Horace Wong

Editor

Ka-Fai Cheung

Production Design

Simon So

Music

Peter Kam

Sound

Costume Designer

Emi Wada

Action Director

Stephen Tung

©

Production Companies

Beijing Galloping

Horse Films Co., Ltd.

Media Asia Films

Limited, Zhejiang

Dongyang Dragon

Entertainment

Venture Investment

Co., Gamania Digital

Entertainment

Co., Ltd., Lumiere

Motion Picture

Corporation, Beijing

Heguchuan TV & Film

Co., Ltd present

A Lion Rock

production

A film by Chao-Pin Su

Film Bureau State

Administration of

Radio, Film & TV

Executive Producers

Li Ming

Peter Lam

Yan Ming

Albert Liu

May Su

Dai Zhengyu

Ivy Zhong

Tina Shi

Lorraine Ho

Cast

Michelle Yeoh

Zeng Jing

Jung Woo-sung

Jiang Ah-sheng

Wang Xueqi

Cao Feng, The

Wheel King

Barbie Hsu

Ye Zhanqing,

Turquoise

Shawn Yue

Lei Bin

Kelly Lin

Xi Yu, Drizzle //

onscreen: Shi Yu

Guo Xiaodong

Zhang Renfeng

Jiang Yiyan

Tian Qingtong

Leon Dai

Lian Sheng, The

Magician

Paw Hee-Ching

Mrs Cai

Jin Shi-Jie

Doctor Li

Matt Wu

Killer Bear

Pace Wu

Qing Jian, Kongdong

Teal Sword

Calvin Li

Monk Jian Hui/

Lu Zhu, Wisdom

Angeles Woo

Eater Bear

Dolby Digital

In Colour

[2.35:1]

Subtitles

Distributor

Ratpack Films

Chinese

theatrical title

Jianyu Jianghu

Ancient China. Secret society the Dark Stones kills minister Zhang Haiduan to steal half the mummified remains of the Bodhidharma, said to have magical curative power to regenerate lost limbs. But assassin Drizzle steals the mummy, leaves Zhang's son Renfeng for dead when he challenges her, and goes into hiding. The monk Wisdom takes her as a pupil and shows her – dying in the process – that her teacher (Dark Stone leader Wheel King) has deliberately taught her an incomplete sword technique to leave her vulnerable. Drizzle asks Doctor Li to change her face and starts living in the capital as cloth merchant Zeng Jing. Her landlady Cai matches her with courier Jiang Ah-sheng, and the couple soon marry. But Zeng uses her dazzling martial skills to foil a robbery, attracting the attention of the vengeful Dark Stones. Wheel King convenes his assassins Lei Bin, Magician and Turquoise; they corner Zeng, promising to let her live if she surrenders her theft and helps restore the mummy's two halves. This she does, but the Dark Stones attack her anyway; Magician dies in the fray. Ah-sheng nurses Zeng and reveals his own martial skills when the Dark Stones arrive. Wheel King (actually court eunuch Cao Feng) confesses to Turquoise that he wants the mummy to regain his manhood. Zeng learns that Ah-sheng is actually Renfeng, also saved and given a new face by Doctor Li. In a final confrontation, Zeng defeats the Dark Stones. Zeng and Ah-sheng agree to leave past grievances behind and stay married.

The Road A Story of Life and Death

United Kingdom/Republic of Ireland 2012

Director: Marc Isaacs

Certificate PG 78m 27s

Reviewed by Sophie Mayer

Watling Street crosses England from Wroxbeter to Dover, passing towards its eastern end through London. Marc Isaacs's documentary considers the magnetic pull between its West London stretch (from Edgware to the Edgware Road) and the port for the ferry from Ireland that almost touches its western end. Visiting Kilburn, the destination for Irish migrants to London throughout the 20th century, Isaacs encounters other immigrant communities, particularly from the Asian subcontinent. Alongside his Irish subjects – retired labourer Billy, fresh-off-the-boat singer Keelta – he places Kashmiri hotel receptionist Iqbal, a Burmese Buddhist monastery and Muharram celebrations at Marble Arch and in Cricklewood. We also meet Peggy, who fled Austria to escape the Nazis, and German air stewardess Birgitte, both of whom made unhappy marriages with Englishmen.

Isaacs is as skilled at eliciting heartfelt reflections from his subjects as he is at weaving their disparate experiences into a convincing portrait of a slice of London. In the moments when these separate elements overlap – for example, when Iqbal, who is Sunni, observes and comments on the Shia celebration of Muharram, which reminds him of similar celebrations witnessed in his youth – the film both expands and illuminates its argument that on the straightest of roads, paths paradoxically cross. The thematic parallels, however, and particularly the forced parallel around love and marriage that sees the arrival of Iqbal's wife Asia as the film's climactic moment, are less successful: it's hard to take at face value the voiceover's claim that marriage will give Iqbal a sense of belonging, when the experience of both Peggy and Birgitte contradicts this.

The voiceover, which often covers the overfamiliar trope of night-time travelling shots, has an air of abstraction, as if spoken by someone just passing through. Its lack of telling detail is all the more surprising given that Isaacs co-wrote it with Iqbal Ahmed, author of *Sorrows of the Moon*, a beautiful collection of stories of London migrants. No clear historical facts about patterns of migration are given beyond some black-and-white images of (presumably) Irish day labourers intercut with shots of Asian day labourers.

While this associative editing fits the



Westenders: 'The Road'

meditative mood, it leaves considerable gaps in the viewer's knowledge. While aspiring to the psychogeographical poetry present in Ahmed's book, *The Road* isn't strictly an essay-film, as it neither creates the density of association achieved by, for example, 2012's *Patience (After Sebald)*, nor sets up larger speculations about the economic and historical circumstances that brought its subjects to the area. Glimpses of Santander and Marriott signs may make the viewer wonder about globalisation and the comparative lack of freedom of movement for people as opposed to corporations and capital, but the film passes no comment.

At its best it is a document of dignity and the density of a life, as when it spends time with Billy and Peggy. (Both died before filming ended: Isaacs tells the viewer that he found Billy's body and wonders how long it might have lain undiscovered had it not been for the documentary project.) There is a vivid return of self in Billy as he engages the camera's attention, talking about his loss of identity on retiring. Similarly, Peggy's determination to wrongfoot Isaacs's questions and assert herself is engaging. Their wealth of experience and articulation *in extremis* are of far more interest than the A5. 📺

Credits and Synopsis

Producers

Rachel Wexler

Aisling Ahmed

Written by

Marc Isaacs

Iqbal Ahmed

Filmed by

Marc Isaacs

Film Editor

David Charap

Music Composed by

Lance Hogan

Dubbing Mixer

Mark Henry

Bungalow Town

Productions and

Marc Isaacs Films

in association with

Crow Hill Films

For BBC

In association with

Bord Scannán na

hÉireann/Irish

Film Board

A Marc Isaacs Film

Executive Producers

for BBC:

Nick Fraser

Kate Townend

Drakes Avenue

Pictures

7060 ft +8frames

©Bungalow Town
Productions/
Crow Hill Films
Production
Companies

In Colour

[1.85:1]

Distributor

A documentary about people living in areas of West London traversed by the A5, a Roman road known for some of its length as Watling Street. Keelta, a young musician, arrives from Ireland to join the historic Irish community in Kilburn. She finds work in a pub where the regulars include Billy, a retired transport worker struggling to fill his days. Iqbal is a young migrant who is looking to put down roots in London; he is working as a hotel receptionist in Maida Vale and awaiting his wife's arrival from Kashmir. Peggy arrived from Vienna as a Jewish refugee in the 1930s and, like Billy, is adjusting to old age. Birgitte, a former air stewardess, runs a hostel for language students and cares for her ex-husband Royston. Nom Rajj joins a Buddhist monastery. The experiences of exile and love unite the disparate storylines – as does death, since Billy and Peggy both die before the end of filming.

Robot & Frank

USA 2012

Director: Jake Schreier

Certificate 12A 88m 45s

Reviewed by Trevor Johnston

The threatening encroachment of technology into people's daily lives is a standby in dystopian sci-fi fare, but here it's treated with a decidedly lighter touch as the crux of an unusual buddy picture. Frank Langella's former cat burglar (also named Frank) lives on his own in leafy upstate New York and is the archetypal grumpy old man; he is also, unfortunately, flirting increasingly with senility as he approaches seventy. He needs a helping hand, so his son kits him out with a shiny new VGC-80L, a personal healthcare robot that will take care of the housework, dole out medication and supervise fitness and diet. Anthropomorphic in form, shaped in white plastic with a black visor, the robot is a traditional-looking design, voiced by Peter Sarsgaard in the soothing tones of Kubrick's HAL 9000 – and on screen it is very obviously the work of an operator in a suit. Frank, needless to say, hates it on sight, objects to being nannied, and would switch it off if he had any idea how to do so. Conflict looms but, true to buddy-movie formula, so too does an unexpected bond, born when Frank realises that he can teach his new electronic pal to assist him in his old trade of jewel thief.

That the robot – which Frank never graces with a name – has no problem with criminality, having never been programmed to deal with it, is slightly hard to credit, just one of sundry instances in the film where the laws of robotics appear to follow the prime directive of movie-plot logic. What's more, Frank's mental capacities also seem to ebb and flow from doddery vagueness (we first see him committing a break-in on what turns out to be his own house) to canny sharpness (in a subsequent effective crime spree) at the convenience of the screenwriter. Ultimately this sacrifices genuine dramatic tension, since crises tend to be smoothed out too easily, and the conflicts' soft edges also put paid to anything resembling thematic heft. Strangely,



Count on me: Frank Langella

Run for Your Wife

United Kingdom 2012
Directors: Ray Cooney, John Luton
Certificate 12A 93m 32s

Reviewed by Hannah McGill

"There's something creepy about British light entertainment and there always has been," the novelist Andrew O'Hagan wrote recently in the *London Review of Books*. "Joe Orton meets the Marquis de Sade at the end of the pier, with a few Union Jacks fluttering in the stink and a mother-in-law tied in bunting to a ducking-stool..." O'Hagan was responding to the BBC's alleged protection of its long-time presenter Jimmy Savile, and possibly others in its pay, from prosecution for multiple sex offences.

It's a context that lends a strange tang to this revival of Ray Cooney's 1983 stage farce, which features cameo appearances from scores of faded stars from mainstream British comedy history. Not that any of the individuals glimpsed are involved in the enquiry that has spun out from the Savile revelations, but they are part of an era of nudge-nudge double entendres and blithe political incorrectness that used to be seen as 'more innocent' and now seems anything but. And the cruelty that O'Hagan identifies is there in spades in *Run for Your Wife*, an update of sorts that, while it relocates the play's central bigamy caper to the present day, holds on tight to fearful, nasty and dismissive attitudes towards women and particularly homosexuals.

John Smith, taxi driver and bigamist, finds himself in hot water when a head injury throws him off schedule and the two wives he keeps on opposite sides of London look set to find out about each other. His eventual get-out is to let a police officer believe that he lives in a multiple-partner homosexual ménage. The hooting dismay with which this false revelation is greeted, and which it invites in the audience, gestures to an era when homosexuality and bisexuality were unthinkable perversions, punchlines to disgraceful jokes. (Danny Dyer as John even deploys the dusty term 'AC/DC' to describe his fake orientation; one of his wives, Michelle, prefers 'ambidextrous', though whether this is a bad joke or a script malapropism is hard to determine.) Non-heterosexuality is also automatically conflated with transvestism.



Farce-fetched: Danny Dyer, Neil Morrissey

The film is not just politically retro. It also disregards all the elements of modern living that make its story an anachronistic nonsense – such as the fact that even the most conventional young people don't feel the need to be married in order to have ongoing sexual relationships, or that mobile phones now allow you to keep track of your nearest and dearest when you don't know where they are. Is it nitpicking to critique a harmless romp on this basis? Well, not when it has a major plot concerning John's reluctance to be seen in a newspaper photograph. As for harmless... "She likes a bit of rough stuff," says John's friend Gary to an onlooker after Michelle slaps him. "Mr Smith had a perfectly happy marriage till you came mincing into his life," a policeman tells one of John's supposed homosexual partners.

This is a film with horrid rot behind its cheeky grin. That the acting is painfully bad hardly needs to be noted, but special credit goes to former pop star Sarah Harding who, in the role of Wife No. 2 Stephanie, manages to make an awkward, self-conscious mess out of a seconds-long sequence involving waking up and yawning. ☹

though, once you've adjusted to expectations of a somewhat diaphanous divertissement, Jake Schreier's first feature is extremely charming on its own terms, taking the buddy-buddy template into unusual territory and doing so with wry wit and a host of rather lovely performances. Yes it's light, but it's done well enough to remind us that lightness is a relatively rare celluloid commodity.

The key to it all is Langella's delightful central turn, which never camps it up or talks down to the material, instead underplaying with such consistent finesse that he very nearly has us believing in it. There's one moment, a not unpredictable declaration of friendship for his robo-pal, which other actors (let's just say Robin Williams) would have utterly doused in syrup, but he plays it almost under his breath to create a deft emotional frisson. *Robot & Frank* isn't the sort of movie that wins awards, but Langella's work here really deserves recognition. ☺

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by Galt Niederhoffer Sam Bisbee	In association with White Hat Entertainment and Dog Run Pictures	Susan Sarandon Jennifer Rachael Ma Robot performer Bonnie Bentley Ava
Screenplay Christopher Ford	Executive Producers Danny Rifkin Delaney Schultz Jenna Schultz	Dolby Digital In Colour [2.35:1]
Director of Photography Matthew J. Lloyd	Producers Bob Kelman Tom Valerio Bill Perry Jeremy Bailor Ann Porter Stefan Sonnenfeld	Distributor Momentum Pictures
Editor Jacob Craycroft		7,987 ft +8 frames
Production Designer Sharon Lomofsky	Cast Frank Langella Frank James Marsden Hunter Liv Tyler Madison Jeremy Strong Jake Jeremy Sisto Sheriff Rowlings Peter Sarsgaard voice of Robot	
Music Francis and the Lights		
Composed by Francis and the Lights		
Sound Design Paul Hsu		
Costume Designer Erika Munro		
©Hallowell House, L.L.C.		
Production Companies Samuel Goldwyn Films and Stage 6 Films present a Park Pictures feature		

Upstate New York, the near future. Retired cat burglar Frank lives alone outside a small town and is gradually losing his faculties. His lawyer son Hunter buys him the latest personal healthcare robot to look after the housework for him and improve his fitness and diet, though crotchety Frank is initially resistant to its ministrations. Frank has a soft spot for local librarian Jennifer, and is upset to learn that the library is to be redeveloped by software magnate Jake. Frank realises that he can teach his robot to help him ply his former trade, and the pair successfully filch an antique copy of Don Quixote from the library before its shelves are emptied of books. A visit from Frank's political activist daughter Madison proves an unhelpful distraction, but by demonstrating to her his reliance on the robot he allays her worries. Left alone again, he steals valuable jewels from Jake's mansion. Given his past record, he comes under suspicion from the local sheriff; eventually he persuades Hunter to act as a decoy carrier while he and his robot make their escape. At the library, he suddenly remembers that Jennifer is in fact his ex-wife, and realises the extent of his failing mental powers. He wipes the robot's memory to cover his tracks. Frank is sent to a home, seemingly in decline, but when Hunter and Madison visit he slips them a note – the jewels are buried under the tomatoes that the robot planted in the garden.

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by James F Simpson Graham Fowler	Run For Your Wife Film Ltd	Derek Griffiths PC Pulford Nick Wilton cabbie Jeffrey Holland Dick Louise Michelle Francis
Written by Ray Cooney Based on his stage play	Executive Producer Vicki Michelle	
Director of Photography Graham Fowler	Cast Danny Dyer John Smith Sarah Harding Stephanie Smith Denise Van Outen Michelle Smith Neil Morrissey Gary Gardener Kellie Shirley Susie Browning Christopher Biggins Bobby Lionel Blair Cyril Nicholas Le Provost Detective Sergeant Porterhouse Ben Cartwright Detective Sergeant Troughton	In Colour [2.35:1]
Editor John Pegg		Distributor Ball Park Film Distributors
Production Designer Fiona Russell		8,418 ft +0 frames
Original Music Walter Mair		
Sound Recordists Marco Ivarone Nikolaos Nikolajkos		
Costume Designer Tony Priestley		
©Run For Your Wife Film Ltd		
Production Companies A Ray Cooney film		

London, the present. Taxi driver John Smith has one wife, Stephanie, in Finsbury, and another, Michelle, in Stockwell. His carefully time-managed life begins to fall apart when he intervenes in a mugging, acquires a head injury and passes a night in hospital. Both Mrs Smiths call the police and John, drugged, is delivered back to Michelle when he should be with Stephanie. He hides in neighbour Gary's flat while Gary poses as him. Suspicious about his double identity, police in both Stockwell and Finsbury pursue John. He flees to Finsbury with Gary to reunite with Stephanie. DS Troughton follows them from Stockwell; confronted, John claims that he and Gary are lovers. Troughton passes this on to Michelle, who hurries from Stockwell and gains the impression that John and Gary are part of a secret gay sex ring. DS Troughton takes John in for questioning; John comes clean but the sergeant doesn't believe him. John is seen in bed with each wife in turn, having appeased Michelle with the story that he is helping Gary to cover up multiple gay affairs, and that Stephanie is a transvestite. Both women tell him that they are pregnant.

Safe Haven

USA 2013
Director: Lasse Hallström
Certificate 12A 1115m Os

Reviewed by Matthew Taylor

Lasse Hallström's second Nicholas Sparks adaptation (after 2010's *Dear John*) sees the director once known for tackling feted works by John Irving and Annie Proulx at something of a low ebb. Anonymously assembled, it slavishly replicates Sparks's glutinous formula – folksy pastoral setting (here, the much photographed Southport, North Carolina), photogenic star-crossed lovers, tinges of mysticism – with little conviction or dramatic momentum. As filmed, Sparks's story suggests a reworking of *Sleeping with the Enemy* for daytime TV: Erin (Julianne Hough) flees an abusive marriage in Boston, landing in idyllic Southport as the mysterious 'Katie'. Initially wary of forging ties, she's swayed – first by an oddly omnipresent neighbour and platitude-dispenser ("Life is full of second chances"), then by a tentative romance with hunky widower and father of two Alex (Josh Duhamel).

It's hard to pin down what's most ineffectual about *Safe Haven*, whether it's Hough and Duhamel's bland leads, the dull widescreen cinematography or the leaden script. What tension there is dissipates once the traumatic event that led Erin to escape is unveiled via gradual flashbacks, leaving the cloying dreariness of the small-town affair to take precedence. Forgettable then – until the insertion of a metaphysical twist that's as unearned as it is bound to elicit audience groans. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Ryan Kavanaugh
Nicholas Sparks
Marty Bowen
Wyck Godfrey
Screenplay
Dana Stevens
Gage Lansky
Based upon the
novel by Nicholas
Sparks
**Director of
Photography**
Terry Stacey
Edited by
Andrew Mondshein
**Production
Designer**
Kara Lindstrom
Music
Deborah Lurie
Sound Mixer
Carl Rudisill
Costume Designer
Leigh Leverett

©Safe Haven
Productions, LLC
**Production
Companies**

Relativity Media
presents a Temple
Hill Entertainment
and Relativity
Media production
in association with
Nicholas Sparks
Productions
A Lasse
Hallström film
**Executive
Producers**
Tucker Tooley
Ron Burkle
Jason Colbeck
Robbie Brenner
Shannon Gaulding
Tracey Nyberg

Cast
Josh Duhamel
Alex Wheatley
Julianne Hough
Erin Tierney,
'Katie Feldman'
Cobie Smulders
Jo
David Lyons
Kevin Tierney

Noah Lomax
Josh
Irene Ziegler
Mrs Feldman
**Juan Carlos
Piedrahita**
Junior Detective
Ramirez
Red West
Roger
Mimi Kirkland
Lexie
Robin Mullins
Maddie

**Dolby Digital/
Datasat
In Colour**
[2.35:1]

Distributor
Momentum Pictures

10,350 ft +0 frames

Boston, the present. Having wounded her abusive husband Kevin in self-defence, Erin Tierney flees the city. Kevin, a detective, instigates a hunt for her. Calling herself Katie, Erin settles in small-town Southport, North Carolina. She befriends lonely neighbour Jo and becomes romantically involved with Alex, a young widower and father of two. Kevin is suspended from duty, but deduces Erin's location. Alex balks when he discovers Erin's fugitive status, but later persuades her not to flee again. Kevin sets fire to Alex's house, but is killed during a struggle with Erin. Alex rescues the children from the flames. Jo is revealed to be the spirit of Alex's late wife.

Side by Side

USA 2012
Director: Chris Kenneally

Reviewed by Catherine Wheatley

Hard to credit it, but when George Lucas's *Phantom Menace* opened on two digital screens in 1999, they were the only two such screens in existence. Today, there are more than 85,000 worldwide. It is estimated that by 2015 there will be 150,000.

These statistics, cited in Chris Kenneally's pacy documentary *Side by Side*, give the lie to any rumours that cinema might be on its way out. Whether the same can be said for celluloid, however, is another matter entirely. Tracing the rise of digital filmmaking, Kenneally and producer-narrator Keanu Reeves set out to investigate what stands to be gained, and lost, if what theorist Lev Manovich has referred to as cinema's "bastard child" completes its oedipal trajectory.

Weighing in on the issue are directors such as Martin Scorsese, David Lynch, Steven Soderbergh, Christopher Nolan, Lars von Trier and James Cameron, as well as equally distinguished – and often more interesting – below-the-line talent such as DP Vittorio Storaro (*Apocalypse Now*), editor Anne Coates (*Lawrence of Arabia*) and colourist Jill Bogdanowicz (*O Brother, Where Art Thou?*). Film nerds will already be familiar with much of what they have to say (lightweight cameras allow for greater freedom of mobility, photochemical stock still has a much wider dynamic range than digital) and initiates are well served by a clear yet never condescending rehearsal of them, while the film's trickier concepts are neatly illustrated with a panoply of clips and charts. Ironically, given its focus on how film looks, this isn't the most visually inventive of documentaries, but Kenneally compensates with a feast of archival material ranging from Méliès to *Melancholia*.

Of course, the film's real treat lies in its procession of grand masters, who hold forth on their art with zeal. Digital cinema is "seductive but hollow" snarks Nolan, while for his *Dark Knight Rises* collaborator Wally Pfister 3D is little other than "a motherfucking marketing scheme". As advocates for the defence, the smug I-told-you-so stance of Cameron and Lucas grates rather, but digital finds a charming champion in the raffish Anthony Dod Mantle, one of the first cinematographers to embrace the new technology (in 1998, for Thomas Vinterberg's *Festen*) and the first to win an Oscar for his digital cinematography (a decade later, with Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire*).

Reeves is a warm, energetic host, gamely sparring with his subjects ("But the image sucked!" he splutters in response to Robert Rodriguez's praise of an early Sony camera model). His puppyish enthusiasm for his subject seems to infect the film, which is remarkably even-handed. Almost everyone agrees that celluloid projection is bad; almost everyone fears for the future of digital archiving. Otherwise, words such as art and science, vision and compromise, speed and precision, realism and illusion ricochet off the walls but fail to land on any one side of the fence. As Cameron pithily puts it: "What was ever *real*?"

And yet as Reeves rattles through an inventory of camera models – each smaller,



Consider this: Martin Scorsese

stronger, lighter, faster than the last – we are marching towards a foregone conclusion. This is Hollywood after all, the Dream Factory, where as one contributor puts it, "You always have to outpace the audience's imagination." The filmmakers sweetly cede the final word to cinematographer Michael Ballhaus (*The Marriage of Maria Braun*, *Goodfellas*) and his belief that "if you do something with your heart... it doesn't matter what you're using." A more apposite note on which to end *Side by Side* comes from the inventor of the RED camera, Jim Jannard: "Everything in the world will be made better," he tells Reeves. "The question is just when and by whom." One can almost hear the thrum of capitalism's wheels turning. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Keanu Reeves
Justin Szlasa
Written by
Chris Kenneally
**Director of
Photography**
Chris Cassidy
Edited by
Mike Long
Malcolm Hearn
Music
Composed by
Brendan Ryan

Billy Ryan
Ryan Bros. Music
**Re-recording
Mixer/Supervising
Sound Editor**
Lewis Goldstein

©Company
Films, LLC
**Production
Company**
A Company Films,
LLC production

**Dolby Digital
In Colour**
[1.85:1]
Distributor
Axiom Films Limited

A documentary examining the science, art and impact of digital cinema, narrated and hosted by Keanu Reeves. Via a series of interviews with directors (including Martin Scorsese, David Lynch, David Fincher and Danny Boyle), cinematographers, FX specialists, editors, colourists and other key technicians, the film considers the relative merits of digital and celluloid. The effects of digital technologies on various elements of the filmmaking and viewing process – including distribution, projection and archiving – are considered. Lena Dunham and an NYU graduate student discuss the advantages of digital technologies for amateur filmmakers.

The film concludes with Reeves asking his various interviewees how much longer they feel celluloid filmmaking will last. There is no clear consensus but the overwhelming view is that digital will eventually replace it, not least because it is cheaper. The film ends on a positive note, expressing the collective view that good storytelling will prevail irrespective of the medium or technology.

Stoker

USA/United Kingdom 2012
Director: Park Chan-Wook
Certificate 18 98m 50s

Reviewed by Catherine Wheatley

The South Korean director Park Chanwook has proven his skills in manipulating genres, mostly famously with his so-called revenge trilogy *Sympathy for Mr Vengeance*, *Oldboy* and *Lady Vengeance*. His first English-language work, based on a 2010 'black-list' script by *Prison Break* actor Wentworth Miller, is both a continuation and a departure. Dialogue-light, heavy on atmospherics, *Stoker* is an almost-thriller which sets everything out clearly for the viewer and yet remains filled with uncertainty. As in the best of Patricia Highsmith, it's not entirely clear, even at the film's end, what crime has been committed or who has committed it.


Stoker takes place over the course of about a week, in the aftermath of a funeral. Richard Stoker (Dermot Mulroney) has died in a mysterious car accident, "burned to a crisp" on the day his only child, India, turns 18. India (Mia Wasikowska, channelling early Winona Ryder) is a silent and solemn girl who claims to see and hear "what others cannot". Now she's left alone with her spoiled, sensitive mother Evelyn (Nicole Kidman) on their sprawling estate. But before the dust can settle on Richard's grave, up pops India's Uncle Charlie (a charismatic Matthew Goode). Charlie is younger than Richard; he's also handsome, charming and full of stories of exotic travels. It's not long before he's happily ensconced in the Stoker household.

Evelyn is thrilled by the attentions of Charlie – a fresher, sexier version of the husband whose affections had waned long before he departed her life. India, however, is rather more wary of this cuckoo in the nest. Her suspicions spill out into the *mise en scène*, as spiders creep up stockinged legs and lightbulbs sway and flicker. Every component of the film works towards creating a creepy, supernatural aura, from Clint Mansell's eerie score to Chung Chung-hoon's staccato cinematography and even – perhaps especially – Marcia Eden's costumes. Interiors



Charlie is my darling: Nicole Kidman

and exteriors are cast in a spooky green pallor seemingly culled from the suits of Hitchcock heroines (from Novak forest to Hedren eau de nil). Even before elderly ladies start disappearing it's clear that *Stoker* has been heavily influenced by Hitchcock's *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), and there are traces too of *Psycho* (1960) in the isolated mansion and nervy, overbearing Evelyn.

It was François Truffaut who famously claimed that Hitch filmed scenes of love as if they were scenes of murder and scenes of murder as if they were scenes of love. As *Stoker's* psychological drama races on, the two become increasingly indistinguishable: death and brutal violence become firstly a metaphorical, then a literal, orgasm. If Park is attracted to Hitchcock's pervy mélange of sex and violence, however, he has no patience for the subtlety with which the grand master rendered it – the simmering voyeurism of *Psycho's* shower scene is transformed here into something far more explicit indeed. Yet the film lacks the visceral punch that many have come to associate with the director who once filmed an actor eating a live octopus, occupying the space between haunting and horrific. *Stoker* may well be a film that reveals greater depths on repeat viewings. But for all its spark, it never catches alight. 

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Ridley Scott
Tony Scott
Michael Costigan
Written by
Wentworth Miller
Director of Photography
Chung-Hoon Chung
Film Editor
Nicolas de Toth
Production Designer
Thérèse DePrez
Music
Clint Mansell
Sound Mixer
Glen Trew
Costume Designers
Kurt Swanson
Bart Mueller

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Century Fox Film Corporation and Dune Entertainment III LLC (in Brazil, Italy, Japan, Korea and Spain)
Production Companies
Fox Searchlight Pictures presents in association with Indian Paintbrush a Scott Free Production Made in association with Dayday Films and Ingenious Media
Executive Producers
Steven Rales
Mark Roybal

Cast
Mia Wasikowska
India Stoker
Matthew Goode
Charles Stoker
Dermot Mulroney
Richard Stoker
Jacki Weaver
Gwendolyn Stoker
Phyllis Somerville
Mrs McGarrick
Nicole Kidman
Evelyn Stoker

Alden Ehrenreich
Whip
Lucas Till
Pitts
Ralph Brown
sheriff
Judith Godrèche
Doctor Jacquin

Dolby Digital/
Datasat/SDDS
In Colour
[2.35:1]

Distributor
20th Century Fox
International (UK)

8,895 ft +0 frames

US, the present. On the day of India Stoker's 18th birthday, her father Richard is killed in a car accident, leaving her alone with her mother Evelyn. At Richard's funeral, his brother Charlie arrives unannounced. Despite the fact that she hasn't met him before, Evelyn invites him to stay. Charlie soon begins a flirtation with Evelyn, though India is wary of him. Shortly after his arrival, the housekeeper vanishes; when his Aunt Gin tries to warn Evelyn that something is wrong with Charlie, she too goes missing. Charlie hangs around India's school and hints at a mysterious connection between them, arousing her burgeoning sexuality. After catching Charlie in a clinch with Evelyn, India clumsily seduces a classmate, Whip, who then tries to rape her. Charlie appears out of nowhere and kills him. Charlie and India bury the body.

In her father's study, India discovers letters from Charlie detailing his travels around the world. They all bear the stamp of a private asylum. India realises that Charlie is insane, and that he murdered Richard and possibly his younger brother too. Confronted, Charlie admits to the killings. With the police closing in, Charlie and India plan to run off to New York but are interrupted by Evelyn. Charlie tries to strangle Evelyn but India shoots and kills him. After burying Charlie's body, India lures the local sheriff to a quiet spot and murders him. She declares herself an adult now.


Texas Chainsaw

USA 2013
Director: John Luessenhop
Certificate 18 91m 50s

Reviewed by Kim Newman

The history of the sequel/remake rights to Tobe Hooper's classic shocker *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) is extraordinarily complicated. Hooper was prevailed on by Cannon to deliver his own blackly comic revised version in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2* (1986) – which gave the once formidably unnamed killer family the pun handle of Sawyer. (That brought in Bill Moseley as a core family member: he cameos here as patriarch Drayton, played in the first two films by Jim Siedow; the original Leatherface, Gunnar Hansen, also pops up as one of several hitherto unseen additional Sawyers killed by a mob in the prologue.) Jeff Burr's *Leatherface: The Texas Chainsaw Massacre III* (1990) tried to reshape the franchise to fit in with new owner New Line's *Friday the 13th* and *Nightmare on Elm Street* series, playing down the family to boost its most notable killer as a merchandisable character. Rights reverted to Kim Henkel, co-writer of Hooper's film, who directed the frankly crackpot *The Return of the Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1994). The saw then fell silent until Marcus Nispel's remake *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (2003) for Michael Bay's Platinum Dunes shingle, which turned the Sawyers into the equally punning Hewitts, and its prequel, Jonathan Liebesman's *Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Beginning* (2006).

This 3D redux finds the rights back with Henkel's faction, hence the return of the Sawyers. Its general approach is blander, hackier and more franchise-biddable even than the Platinum Dunes films, down to the signing of John Luessenhop – adequate helmer of the mainstream heist flop *Takers* (2010) – as director and the oddly attenuated title. It opens with stereoscopic footage from Hooper's film, which is so much rawer than the new material that even the single shot of Moseley cut in to replace Siedow stands out like a sore thumb. There is also a coy fudge about the dating of the original events, with the year never mentioned, so that toned-tummy twentysomething Alexandra Daddario can play the lead, a woman who logically ought to be about 40.

The film seesaws between weakly restaging scenes from the original, as if hoping to qualify as a sequel-cum-remake, and weaving a new story that upends things to present the truly monstrous cannibal clan as put-upon victims of corrupt lynch law, even transforming Leatherface into a righteous avenger and 



Saw misgivings: Alexandra Daddario

← a pathetic big kid. The heroine's supposed friends are marked for death by their betrayal of her – the affable hitchhiker sets out to loot her mansion, her best friend repeatedly seduces her boyfriend – so that she is able to forge a bond with her real kin and accept the murder of everyone she knows, though this new wrinkle seems derivative of the relationship between heroine and killer in the *Halloween* sequels (for no real reason, *Texas Chainsaw* is set at Halloween).

It's a clumsy, cynical exercise, and all the more so for its inept handling of 3D – a few saw-in-your-face moments aside, Luessenhop keeps blurring the action and cutting away rather than holding on long enough for the dimensionality to add to the cringeworthy of the gore or suspense sequences. ☹

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Carl Mazzoneo
Screenplay
Adam Marcus
Debra Sullivan
Kirsten Elms
Story
Stephen Susco
Adam Marcus
Debra Sullivan
Based on characters
created by Kim
Henkel and
Tobe Hooper
**Director of
Photography**
Anastas Michos
Edited by
Randy Bricker
**Production
Designer**
William A. Elliott
Music
John Frizzell
Sound Mixer
Steve C. Aaron
Costume Designer
Mary E. McLeod

©Twisted Chainsaw
Properties, Inc. and
Nu Image, Inc.
**Production
Companies**
Lionsgate presents
a Millennium Films
and Main Line

**Pictures production
Executive
Producers**
Avi Lerner
Mark Burg
Michael Paseornek
Jason Constantine
Eda Kowan
Danny Dimbort
John Thompson
Trevor Short
Tobe Hooper
Rene Besson
Christa Campbell
Lati Grobman
Robert Kuhn
Kim Henkel
Film Extracts
*The Texas Chain Saw
Massacre* (1974)

Cast
Alexandra Daddario
Heather Miller
Dan Yeager
Jed Sawyer,
'Leatherface'
Tremaine 'Trey
Songz' Neverson
Ryan
Scott Eastwood
Carl
Tania Raymonde
Nikki
Shaun Sipos
Darryl

**Keram Malicki-
Sanchez**
Kenney
James MacDonald
Officer Marvin
Thom Barry
Sheriff Hooper
Paul Rae
Burt Hartman
Richard Riehle
Farnsworth
Bill Moseley
Drayton Sawyer
Gunnar Hansen
Boss Sawyer
[uncredited]
Sue Rock
Arlene Miller
David Born
Gavin Miller

**Dolby Digital/
Datasat
In Colour**
[2.35:1]

**Some screenings
presented in 3D**

Distributor
Lionsgate UK
8,265 ft +0 frames

Newt, Texas. An angry mob burns down the home of the cannibal Sawyer family, but rednecks Arlene and Gavin Miller steal a Sawyer baby and raise it as their daughter.

Some decades later, Heather Miller learns that she's adopted when Verna Carson, her real grandmother, dies and leaves her the Carson mansion in Newt. With her boyfriend Ryan, best friend Nikki and Nikki's boyfriend Kenny, Heather travels to Newt to take over her property. En route the young people pick up Darryl, a hitchhiker who tries to rob the house, discovering a secret cellar. Heather's cousin Jed Sawyer, aka Leatherface, who has been kept in the cellar by Verna, escapes and kills Darryl and Heather's friends with a chainsaw. Escaping to town, Heather learns about her heritage and is assaulted by Mayor Hartman, the erstwhile mob leader, who is still intent on wiping out the Sawyer family. Hartman drags Heather to the abandoned slaughterhouse where her family worked, but she is rescued by Jed, who kills the mayor with the tacit approval of Sheriff Hooper.

Heather takes over her grandmother's role as Jed's custodian, and turns him on her adoptive parents when they come to visit, hoping for a share of the inheritance.

This Is 40

USA 2012

Director: Judd Apatow

Certificate 15 133m 37s

Reviewed by Michael Atkinson

Comedy is too often the province of unchecked narcissism – consider the unfunny tales of comic despotism running from Chaplin to Lou Costello, Jerry Lewis, Eddie Murphy and beyond – and although he hasn't yet, mercifully, put himself into one of his own comedies, Judd Apatow has always, in effect, been making films about himself. That self – knowingly immature, profane, slovenly, self-obsessed, inept with women – has been both the Apatow subgenre's cash cow and its tiresome raison d'être, and now that he's a bajillionaire Hollywood institution and no longer a ball-scratching stand-up comic, it's only natural the man would want to centre a film on the New Me, complete with his own porcelain actress wife, his two precocious daughters essentially playing themselves, and an eight-figure Brentwood mansion only a few doors down from where the Apatows actually live. I mean, what else could be as interesting?

The egomaniacal temerity of *This Is 40* only begins with Apatow's reality-show strategies – there's also that title, which boldly suggests that the life travails of Apatow avatar Paul Rudd and everyone's wife Leslie Mann generally reflect all or at least many of our lives at the titular birthday. This is 40? It's enough to inspire Occupy Apatow. But of course the most pressing question is whether the film is simply funny, whatever its context, because funny is the free pass that acquits all films and filmmakers of all other sins. (The characters are inherited from Apatow's *Knocked Up*, 2007.) Unfortunately, Apatow's domestic tunnel vision creates a new kind of strained discordance – scenes double in length past the point where an ordinary comedy would've called a schtick quits, and much of what's on the table (familial warfare, mostly) is manifested with surreal spurts of 'fresh' profanity and free-associative ramblings. Bafflement is a common and apt reaction. By itself the set-up is deliberately mundane (upscale Beverly Hills couple face the fear of ageing, their own hostility to each other, and financial terror resulting from failed careers and dwindling funds), however overloaded with circumstance. Various bids for realistic life-messiness, including an unplanned pregnancy, a flashlight-and-haemorrhoid moment and a late-act biking accident, just seem like desperate clutter.

But Apatow's realisation of this template is something else. The characters do very little that isn't so inappropriate it borders on pathological – lambast each other's bathroom habits, scream "fuck you" at their children, take lavish spa vacations when their lives are descending into penury, whimsically expose family secrets at a crowded backyard party, and so on. Mann, as a glam 40-year-old California goddess enduring an ostensibly adorable midlife seizure we can all identify with, is especially grating and maniacal, screaming threatening curses at someone else's middle-schooler and roasting her Apatow-ish husband, although his only faults appear to be a musical snobbishness (he's a music-industry promoter, after all) and a weakness for cupcakes. The whole cast, including Albert Brooks as Rudd's money-grubbing



Clocked up: Paul Rudd

Jewish father and a predictably splenetic Melissa McCarthy, all obviously dig the improvisational open road Apatow provides for them (coming up with his own lines, Brooks has the film's most memorable zingers), but what often begins as promising and witty soon degenerates into Tourette's-like logorrhea.

So, for want of hilarity and rationally conceived characters, Apatow's ultimate message can't help but loom into view, especially when Mann undresses for the second or third time: *don't you wish you were Judd?* Sure, we all do – but that just makes this two-and-a-quarter-hour vanity project chafe all the more. ☹

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Judd Apatow
Barry Mendel
Clayton Townsend
Written by
Judd Apatow
Based on characters
created by Judd
Apatow
**Director of
Photography**
Phedon Papamichael
Edited by
Brent White
Jay Deuby
David Bertman
**Production
Designer**
Jefferson Sage
Music
Jon Brion
Sound Mixer
Ken MacLaughlin
Costume Designer
Leesa Evans

©Universal Studios
**Production
Companies**
Universal Pictures
presents an Apatow
production
A Judd Apatow film
Executive Producer
Paula Pell
Film Extracts
Sunrise (1928??)

Cast
Paul Rudd
Pete
Leslie Mann
Debbie
John Lithgow
Oliver Scott
Megan Fox
Desi
Maude Apatow
Sadie
Iris Apatow
Charlotte

Chris O'Dowd
Ronnie
Jason Segel
Jason
Melissa McCarthy
Catherine
Graham Parker
himself
Albert Brooks
Larry

**Dolby Digital/
Datasat/SDDS
In Colour**
[2.35:1]

Distributor
Universal Pictures
International
UK & Eire

12,025 ft +8 frames

Los Angeles, the present. Debbie and Pete are married with two daughters. She owns a struggling boutique; he runs a failing independent record label. Debbie is turning 40, a fact that sends her into a panic and coincides with financial problems and eldest daughter Sadie's hormonal mood swings. Amid their daily crises are employee theft at Debbie's boutique, a doomed Graham Parker album for Pete's record label, an unplanned midlife pregnancy and troubles with their respective fathers – though the biggest problem they face is their failure to communicate. When Pete ends up in the emergency room after an incident on his bike, the two reconcile and look forward to the new baby.

Trashed

United Kingdom 2012
Director: Candida Brady
Certificate 12A 98m 4s

Reviewed by Vadim Rizov

There's recently been a wave of documentaries pinpointing a variety of problems as the most likely precipitator of global apocalypse, from the plausible (fresh-water shortages in 2008's *Flow: For Love of Water*) to the less so (Lyme disease in the same year's *Under Our Skin*). *Trashed* stands out for the presence of an on-camera celebrity obviously committed to the cause and ready to disrupt his schedule with some travelling rather than simply popping in to knock off a quick afternoon's voiceover.

Trashed's subject is waste disposal. The host is Jeremy Irons, introduced on the litter-ridden shores of Lebanon (no more specific identification is provided). "I've always enjoyed beachcombing," he muses in voiceover. "The treasure I used to find in the surf has turned to trash. I want to know *why*." Faux-naivety about the topic is a standard pose for activist filmmakers such as Michael Moore and Eugene Jarecki, who feign surprise and alarm at facts they surely learned before deciding to finance and make the movie in question. Irons's performance has the unexpected effect of increasing your admiration for such documentarian performers, who come off relatively restrained compared to the revered thespian's rendition. Having frequently flirted with – and outright adopted – Great Man hamminess, Irons tramps through the film in sturdy globetrotter outfits, confirming that he's seeing what we're seeing. "This is *appalling*," he pronounces, on viewing a towering Lebanese trash heap, sounding regrettably close to a huffy tourist inspecting too-rustic hotel quarters.

There are many talking heads, some awkwardly posed. One activist sits next to six piled binders of documentation to demonstrate how much damaging information about soil contamination is being withheld. This segues into would-be comic relief, as Irons tramps about



Waste not: Jeremy Irons

a field trying to collect reliable soil samples and loses his marker. ("It was important to do this in a scientific manner.") Later, to illustrate the types of birth defects caused by dioxins, Irons goes to Vietnam and stares at jars full of deformed foetuses and stillborns. The sight of Irons empathetically discovering a new sobriety, showily registered for the camera, turns already questionable images into camp.

At other times, *Trashed* is endearingly close to wonky, trotting out scientists, research and statistics with easy facility. The film is perhaps clearest in its explanation of how the major problem with plastic entering the ocean isn't whole bags entrapping helpless animals, so often seen in fundraising photographs (one of which is cited later by a British grocer as the reason for her store going bag-less); rather, it's when plastic breaks down and is absorbed by smaller fish, entering the food chain – and human consumption – that invisible harm takes place.

Towards the end, Irons hams it up again. After an explanation of how converting waste to energy in prisons is a clean process with minimal costs following the installation of new equipment, he broadly muses, "Hmm, so that's saving the taxpayer." Appeals are made on grounds of health, empathy with the animal world and fiscal sustainability, covering all the standard modes of rhetorical approach. Unfortunately, there's a key presentational error for an essentially classroom-ready, formally unadventurous documentary: the onscreen excerpts from relevant reports and the tags identifying people's names and professional affiliations just aren't big enough, all but illegible on the small screen (this movie's natural home) and surely an eye-strain even in cinemas.

Trashed tries not to alienate potential converts by casting blame at anyone for the sorry state of affairs revealed (though government regulatory bodies failing to do their jobs are an agreeably mutual target for both left and right). Still, the more disastrous the conditions, the more glaring Irons's failure to name any potential culprits behind the mass production of non-biodegradable waste whose disposal can prove toxic. For want of any larger systematic analysis, we're left to view all this as a tragic, innocent accident, and Vangelis's booming, hysterical score doesn't help one bit. Ⓔ

Verity's Summer

United Kingdom 2011
Director: Ben Crowe

Reviewed by Trevor Johnston

A prime example of ambition outstripping execution, this debut feature flags up a whole array of urgent social and political topics but struggles to shape a narrative that does anything more than pay them lip service. Essentially, it's a rites-of-passage story in which teenager Verity's return from boarding school to her parents' country home on the Northumberland coast provides the context for sundry would-be meaningful encounters. The character list indicates that first-time writer-director Ben Crowe is aiming at conjuring a state-of-the-nation statement from this small-town microcosm: Verity is obviously at an impressionable age; her evidently leftie mum Anne lectures in politics; and dad Jim is a detective working in the nearby town, where a Polish minicab driver has been assaulted but is wary of talking to the police. That Verity's father spent time on secondment to the British Army in Iraq adds another layer of contentiousness, since his shared history with a disaffected ex-soldier who wanders into town, a seething mass of resentment and self-recrimination, serves to put his own war record under closer scrutiny.

To be fair, those component parts are credible enough, but the frustration of the film is that it seems content with only a few mild flurries of drama as it brings them into brief contact with one another, never generating an imaginative chain of events that might fruitfully change these lives or, indeed, appreciably impact on the viewers' thoughts and feelings. The warning signs are there early on, when we spend an age simply tracking Verity and the brooding ex-soldier, then establishing her policeman dad's shared Iraq backstory with the latter, while would-be portentous landscape shots and an overabundance of intrusive music cues work far too hard to persuade us there's something terribly significant going on. Sadly, notwithstanding the efforts of a sincere but merely adequate cast, the dramatic

Credits and Synopsis

Producers

Candida Brady
Titus Ogilvy

Written by

Candida Brady

Director of Photography

Sean Bobbitt

Editors

Neal Davies

James Coward

Kate Coggins

Jamie Trevill

Art Director

Gary Waller

Music Composed and Performed by

Vangelis

Sound Recordists

Paul Cameron

Adam Prescod

Dave Burn

Lee Charallah

Caroline Robinson

Rich Whitley

Doug Martin

Dan Harrison

Dan Harbour

©Blenheim TV

Films Limited

Production Companies

Blenheim Films

presents a film by

Candida Brady

Made with the

support of Sigrid

Rausing

Executive

Producers

Jeremy Irons

Tom Wesel

Candida Brady

Titus Ogilvy

Rose Ganguzza

- CHECK

With

Jeremy Irons

In Colour

[1.85:1]

Distributor

Blenheim Films

8,826 ft +0 frames

A documentary, narrated by actor Jeremy Irons, about waste and waste-disposal. Irons travels to locations around the world to examine unsafe, unsustainable waste-disposal. He views trash mountains in Lebanon, explores the health impact of incinerators in Iceland, explains the health risks of dioxins, and speaks with the sailor who discovered the 'Great Pacific Garbage Patch'. Models for a more eco-friendly future are found in two British grocery stores and in San Francisco's attempts to become a 'no waste' city.



Dark past: James Doherty, Nicola Wright

temperature remains stubbornly lukewarm, and when Crowe does try to turn up the heat, the strain is obvious. A robust dinner-party conversation about Jim's conduct in Iraq splinters the family, for instance, in a way that seems hysterically overstated – surely much of this is old news in the household – while Verity's relationship with the moody Polish exile, rather too conveniently predicated on him lurking on the beach instead of driving his minicab, proceeds with quite alarming alacrity towards physical consummation.

Where all this gets us, however, is a mere tally of the issues – ex-soldiers have a hard time, Britain's record in Iraq is murky, immigrants aren't quite integrated into British society – whose superficiality is typified by Crowe asking us to believe that the somewhat preciously named Verity's repeating of the title of a book about Barack Obama, *I Am the Change*, somehow represents a turning point in her life. We certainly don't buy it, and in the circumstances the film's careful pacing and directorial restraint (think Joanna Hogg without the sharp, micro-detailed social insight) prove somewhat academic, if welcome enough on their own terms. **C**

Credits and Synopsis

Producer Emma Biggins Ben Crowe	Pictures production Carl	Executive Carrie Cohen
Written by Ben Crowe	Producers James Brown	Gina Helen Quigley
Cinematography Sara Deane	Edited by Ben Crowe	radio newreader In Colour
Production Designer Zsuzsi Mehrl	Cast Indea Barbe-Willson	[2.35:1]
Original Score Alexandros Miaris	Verity Martin McGlade	Distributor Ben Crowe
Sound Recordist Sebastian Blach	Castle Jacqueline Phillips	
	Mrs Robertson James Doherty	
	Jim Nicola Wright	
	Anne Christian Hogas	
	Karol David House	
	©Verity Pictures Limited	
	Production Companies Multistory Films presents a Verity	

The Northumbrian coast, present day. Teenager Verity returns home from boarding school. Ex-soldier Castle, a disaffected Iraq veteran, is sleeping rough in the area. Castle causes friction in the local pub, where he recognises Verity's father Jim, a police detective formerly seconded to the army in Iraq. Verity surmises that all is not well between Jim and her mother Anne, a university politics lecturer. Jim investigates an assault on Polish minicab driver Karol, who's wary of the police. Castle drowns himself in the sea. Verity befriends Karol after meeting him on the beach. At home, Jim's silence over his experiences in the army is a continuing source of tension, exacerbated during a dinner party when Verity unwittingly antagonises her father. When Castle's body washes up, Jim is assigned to investigate. Verity is warned not to contact Karol but she sneaks out of the house and has sex with him on the beach, only to realise that he's homesick and not really interested in her. Jim is taken off the Castle case because he knew the dead man, bringing to a head Anne's anguish at her husband's possibly sinister conduct in Iraq. Jim leaves home, and mother and daughter strengthen their bond. Jim returns but there is no immediate reconciliation. Verity resolves to change the world in her own way.

The Wee Man

United Kingdom 2012
Director: Ray Burdis
Certificate 18 105m 30s

Reviewed by Ashley Clark

Based on the real-life story of bullied Glaswegian teen turned notorious villain Paul Ferris, Ray Burdis's *The Wee Man* is a perfunctory gangland drama which lays on the earnest ex-con self-pity a little too thickly and never convinces us that its deeply dodgy subject (now reinvented as a crime novelist) is worth such a treatment.

Though Burdis's film is competently constructed, it suffers from a narrow thematic focus and a distinctly limited palette. One need only contrast its drabness and narrative predictability with the visual imagination and psychological depth of Peter Mullan's Glasgow crime story *Neds* (2010) to see how such grim material could have been dramatically enlivened. A rushed third act overstuffed with plot and gratuitous violence does nothing to allay the film's core problems, and it's only the reasonable quality of acting that lifts the material above the pedestrian – the wiry Martin Compston is compelling enough in the lead to make us ignore temporarily the script's barrage of gangster clichés. Its repeated textual references to Coppola's *The Godfather* (1972) simply underscore the extent to which *The Wee Man* operates as a particularly poor relation; the cinematic equivalent of Fredo, if you will. **C**

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by Mike Loveday	association with Wee Man Productions and VTR Media Investments a Ray Burdis film	Rita Thompson
Written by Ray Burdis	Director of Photography Ali Asad	Matt McClure
Editor Will Gilbey	Producers Billy Murray	Johnny
Production Designers Alice Norris	Shail Shah	Michael Elkin
Music John Beckett	Sound Mixer Mario Vincent	Jimmy
Costume Designer Hayley Nebauer	Stunt Co-ordinator Rocky Taylor	
©[TBC]	Production Companies Carnaby International Productions presents in	
	Cast Martin Compston	
	Paul Ferris	
	John Hannah	
	Tam McGraw	
	Patrick Bergin	
	Arthur Thompson	
	Stephen McCole	
	Arthur Thompson Jr, 'Fat Boy'	
	Denis Lawson	
	Willie Ferris	
	Laura McMonagle	
	Anne Marie Ferris	
	Claire Grogan	
	Jenny Ferris	
	Daniel Kerr	
	young Paul	
	Rita Tushingham	

Glasgow, 1990. Paul Ferris leaves prison and joins gangland enforcer Arthur Thompson's criminal fraternity. Thompson is injured in a car-bomb attack. Ferris survives an attempt on his life by chief suspects the Banks brothers, who have bullied him since his youth. Ferris and Thompson's son Arthur Junior (aka Fat Boy) kill the Banks brothers. Fat Boy conspires with gang rival Tam McGraw to oust Thompson and remove Ferris from the picture so that they can work together. Fat Boy escorts Ferris to a house in the countryside which is immediately raided by the police. Ferris is jailed. McGraw's outfit perform a deliberately botched assassination attempt on Thompson. Ferris meets McGraw, who informs him that Fat Boy betrayed him. Fat Boy is shot dead by a masked assailant. Thompson agrees to testify against Ferris, who is again jailed. Ferris is acquitted of murder and turns his back on crime. Thompson dies of a heart attack.

Won't Back Down

USA 2012
Director: Daniel Barnz
Certificate PG 120m 56s

Reviewed by Thirza Wakefield

Writer-director Daniel Barnz already has a (short) history of making films about children: his first feature, *Phoebe in Wonderland* (2008), saw Elle Fanning play a nine-year-old with Tourette syndrome, and his follow-up, *Beastly* (2011), retold *Beauty and the Beast* for a teenaged audience. But his latest film, about a parent-teacher team who take over a failing Pittsburgh school, isn't 'about the kids' as much as it professes to be.

Won't Back Down caused a storm on its US release in November last year because of its perceived vilification of teachers' unions – but criticism of its politics seems somewhat needless when its efforts to hypothesise an impassably localised narrative are superficial and summary. *Won't Back Down* opens with that overused, now suspect prologue "Inspired by actual events". Specifically what these are remains unclear and thus, on false pretences, it links arms with the likes of *Norma Rae* (1979), *Lorenzo's Oil* (1992) and *Erin Brockovich* (2000), appropriating the same rousing source material of these better films about altruistic activism by real-life individuals. Likewise, to close the film on a child's pronouncing of the word "hope" is to suggest that it carries a weight of applicable significance to an ongoing issue or discussion. It doesn't. *Won't Back Down* is a film about parenting and its attendant pressures – and were it content to be so, it might have avoided a broadside.

Jamie Fitzpatrick (Maggie Gyllenhaal) is a low-wage single mum in pursuit of the proper educational support for her dyslexic daughter Malia. On learning that a state law permits parents and teachers to reform backsliding schools, she persuades teacher Nona Alberts (Viola Davis) to co-run a campaign to seize control of John Adams Elementary. The focus of Barnz's film alternates between the home lives of the two women and surface-level sorties into the bureaucracy of the state-school system. The former proves the more suspenseful, since Nona and Jamie appear to fly through their meetings at the Board of Education with relative ease. On the other hand, the film's domestic storyline gradually reveals that both mothers' motivations are rooted in the deeply personal: Nona is aggrieved by a secret guilt in connection with her son's learning difficulties; and Jamie's own experiences of an indifferent education are responsible for her low self-esteem.

But even a (reliably) high-calibre performance by Davis can't push the film into the arena it aspires to occupy. As there's scant 'documentation' of the poor standards of teaching at the accused institution, and no branching out to the mutual concerns of other families, it's crucial we feel compassion for Jamie in particular if we're to root for the future of her daughter – for in the tapered-in scope of this film, that's almost all that's at stake. Where similarly themed films have tended to pronounce the resourcefulness of their heroines, Jamie's overwrought, scattergun approach to improving Malia's prospects confuses change with progress, and makes it difficult to admire her eventual success.

Zaytoun

United Kingdom/France/Israel/USA 2012

Director: Eran Riklis

Certificate 15 109m 51s

Reviewed by Thirza Wakefield

Where *Waltz with Bashir* (2008) and *Lebanon* (2009) remembered the 1982 Lebanon War from the point of view of its frontline, 30 years after the Israeli attack on PLO camps in South Lebanon director Eran Riklis explores Palestinian refugeeism as refracted through the experiences of a 12-year-old boy and his relationship with an Israeli airman, his nominal adversary.

Zaytoun has multiple identities: it's a film about war, and – Riklis welcomes the description – “a road movie... a buddy movie”. Although the conflation of these genres might seem to some viewers an oblique approach to serious themes – escapism where there oughtn't to be – what's interesting about Riklis's film is that none of these ‘types’ comes out on top, and it's very much to his credit that the hybrid works, and that the contextualising dramatisation of historical fact in the first half doesn't undermine or devalue the mismatched-male-bonding story of the second half – or vice versa.

If, overall, *Zaytoun* treads softly over searching subject-matter, Riklis doesn't spare us the realism. Set during the few weeks preceding the invasion, in a Lebanon no less frightening for this, the film opens in wasted Beirut, with the killing of the young boy's father in an airstrike. As one intimate with grief – he is already motherless – Fahed assimilates his father's death quicker than the ordinary boy, taking over his father's care of an olive stripping and entering his name into a notebook of ‘martyrs’ where his English verbs ought to be. Soon afterwards, Fahed's friend Ahmed is fatally wounded when he is dared to cross into the firing line of an inner-city paramilitary post. Even after Ahmed's accident, off-limits Beirut is a playground for Fahed and his friends, who sprint through its narrow streets for sport, hollering profanities at the omnipresent, omniform enemy: the police, their Lebanese peers, Christian Phalangists, PLO camp officials and the Israeli fighter jets that fly overhead. Boisterous and troubled by the charged passivity of the refugee community, Fahed is impatient for the fight. Abdallah El Akal's vital and sensitive performance gives us to understand, in this first half, what it may be like to be born out of your context, to know that where you live is not your ‘home’ even though you've never known anywhere else.

The complexity of Fahed's character feeds informatively into the latter half of the film, and keeps the buddy-movie element from falling into sentimentality. When Israeli pilot Yoni (beautifully judged by Stephen Dorff) crash-lands in Beirut and is taken prisoner, Fahed sees him as a catalyst for progress. Fixated on returning to his father's native village of Balad-al-Sheikh, Fahed makes a deal to release Yoni if he'll accompany him to the north border. Their subsequent cross-country adventure gives Riklis the opportunity to remind us of a side of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that's easily forgotten: the country's scenic beauty, the squandering of the land and the husbandry that's so much a part of identity for the dispossessed. Riklis's talent for wide-angle landscaping pulls this into sharp and meaningful focus. The relationship between Yoni and Fahed is nothing we haven't



Parent power: Viola Davis, Maggie Gyllenhaal

The pivotal insistence in the final scene that the fight is founded on concern for the needs of children is crippled by the film's absorption in its female protagonists – who, in the larger context of *Won't Back Down's* frustrated identity, aren't likely to inspire school-appeal anarchism, Stateside or anywhere else. Ⓢ

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by

Mark Johnson

Written by

Brin Hill

Daniel Barnz

Director of

Photography

Roman Osin

Editor

Kristina Boden

Production

Designer

Rusty Smith

Music

Marcelo Zarvos

Production

Sound Mixer

James Emswiler

Costume Designer

Luca Mosca

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Production

Companies

Walden Media

presents a Gran

Via production

Made possible with

the support of the

Commonwealth of

Pennsylvania and

the Pennsylvania

Film Office

Executive

Producers

Ron Schmidt

Tom Williams

Michael Flaherty

Amanda Morgan

Palmer

Cast

Maggie Gyllenhaal

Jamie Fitzpatrick

Viola Davis

Nona Alberts

Oscar Isaac

Michael Perry

Rosie Perez

Breena Harper

Ving Rhames

Principal Thompson

Lance Reddick

Charles Alberts

Marianne

Jean-Baptiste

Olivia Lopez

Bill Nunn

Principal Holland

Holly Hunter

Evelyn Riske

Emily Alyn Lind

Malia Fitzpatrick

Dante Brown

Cody Alberts

Liza Colón-Zayas

Yvonne

Ned Eisenberg

Arthur Gould

Dolby Digital/

SDDS/Datasat

In Colour

[2.35:1]

Distributor

Buena Vista

International (UK)

10,884 ft +0 frames

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, present day. Single mother Jamie Fitzpatrick is dissatisfied with the standard of education at her dyslexic daughter Malia's new elementary school. Discovering that a state law enables parents and teachers to seize control of failing schools if there is sufficient backing, she persuades one of the teachers, Nona Alberts, to unite with her in rallying support for a takeover. Jamie leaflets local parents with some success, but Nona struggles to win over her colleagues, who by cooperating would be forced to split from the teachers' union and forfeit their pensions. The teachers' union launches a slur campaign against Nona, who is fired. Evelyn Riske, head of the union, tries to persuade Jamie to drop the appeal by offering Malia a scholarship to a reputable charter school. Jamie refuses the offer. She falls out with her teacher boyfriend Michael, who is reluctant to be associated with her ‘anti-labour’ activism. Nona and Jamie gather enough signatures to secure a hearing with the Board of Education. The judicial panel at first rejects Nona and Jamie's petition, but Jamie calls for a voice vote and their appeal is granted. Nona is appointed headteacher of the new school, where Malia and Nona's son Cody become thriving pupils.



Escaping the camps: Abdallah El Akal

seen before, but their tender loyalty to one another and equality in spite of age, meted out in small gestures – the sharing of gum, their respect for each other's talismans – is touching.

Zaytoun doesn't grab an audience by the throat, and its message – that there's humanity in history – isn't a new one. But Riklis's film about the constancy of play and companionship in the most prohibitive of physical and emotional circumstances also proves that there are infinite worthy ways to render truth. Ⓢ

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by

Gareth Ellis-Unwin

Fred Rittenberg

Written by

Nader Rizq

Director of

Photography

Dan Lausten

Editor

Herve Schneid

Production

Designer

Yoel Herzberg

Music

Cyril Morin

Sound Recorderist

Ashi Milo

Costume Designer

Hamada Atallah

©Zaytoun Rights

Ltd - Pathe

Production - Eran

Riklis Productions &

United King Films

Production

Companies

Pathe presents

a Zaytoun

Productions,

Pathe, Eran Riklis

Productions &

United King Films

co-production

in association

with British

Film Company,

BUF/Angeleline

Productions,

H.W. Buffalo,

The Rabionovitch

Foundation for the

Arts - Cinema Project

With the

participation of

Canal+ and Cine+

A Bedlam/Far

Films production

An Eran Riklis film

With the support of

the Leon Recanati

Foundation

Supported by

the Cultural

Administration,

Israel Ministry

of Culture and

Sport - the Israel

Film Council

Developed with

the support of the

BFI's Film Fund

Executive

Producers

Simon Olswang

Jerome Seydoux

Stephen Dorff

Jessica Malik

Albert Martinez

Martin

for Bedlam

Productions:

Simon Egan

for British Film

Company:

Steve Milne

for BUF:

India Osborne

Pierre Buffin

for H.W. Buffalo:

Goran R. Lazovich

Milan Markovic

Cast

Stephen Dorff

Yoni

Abdallah El Akal

Fahed

Alice Taglioni

Leclair

Loai Noufi

Aboudi

Tarik Copti

Seedo

Joni Arbid

Abu-Fahed

Mira Awad

Im Ahmed

Eitan Londner

Ilan

Ashraf Farah

Khalid

Morad Hassan

Rami

Nidal Badarni

Mustafa

Adham Abu Agel

Ahmed

Osamah Khoury

Hassan

Michil Khoury

Ali

Dolby Digital

In Colour

[2.35:1]

Part-subtitled

Distributor

Artificial Eye Film

Company

9,886ft +8 frames

Beirut, Lebanon, 1982. Fahed, a young Palestinian refugee living in a PLO camp, is orphaned when his father is killed in an airstrike. Yoni, an Israeli fighter pilot, crash-lands in the camp and is taken prisoner. Wishing to return to his father's native village, Fahed agrees to release Yoni if the latter will escort him to the northern border. Evading capture by patrolling militia, they arrive at the Israeli border, where UN officials decide that Fahed should be returned to Beirut. Yoni asks them for 24 hours in which to help Fahed locate his father's home. When they find it, Fahed plants his father's olive tree on the land, and consents to be driven back to camp to be reunited with his grandfather.

Home cinema



He met her in a club: cabaret singer Lola Lola (Marlene Dietrich) bewitches the respectable Professor Rath (Emil Jannings)

WINGS OF DESIRE

With his Hollywood career foundering, Josef von Sternberg looked to Europe – and found his muse in Marlene Dietrich

THE BLUE ANGEL

Josef von Sternberg; Germany 1930; Eureka/Masters of Cinema/Region B Blu-ray and Region 2 DVD Dual Format; 106 minutes (German version), 94 minutes (English version); Aspect Ratio 1.33:1; Features: commentary by Tony Rayns, visual essay 'Who Am I?' by Tag Gallagher, Dietrich screen test, Dietrich interview, Dietrich concert footage, trailers

Reviewed by David Thompson

Josef von Sternberg's *The Blue Angel*, the classic tale of a repressed middle-aged man brought down by his obsession for an amoral young woman, is usually cited as the film that made the director's great muse Marlene Dietrich into a star. Few could resist the iconic image of her astride a chair, intoning 'Falling in Love Again' in a low drawl. It became a signature tune, a necessary encore in her own cabaret act (an example of which is included as an extra on this Masters of Cinema combined Blu-ray and DVD release). Dietrich herself

wasn't convinced at the time; she thought it was so terrible that when filming was finished, she told her daughter, "Thank God I will never have to sing that awful song again."

Von Sternberg made *The Blue Angel* in 1930; he'd been invited to direct a film in Germany, and saw it as an opportunity to rescue his career from dwindling success in Hollywood. Born in Vienna in 1894, he had settled in the US with his family when he was in his teens. He was an autodidact who worked his way up through the nuts and bolts of the filmmaking process, and although he had not made his mark at the US box office, his visual mastery and poetic style had impressed in such silent films as *Underworld* (1927) and *The Docks of New York* (1928), and with *Thunderbolt* (1929) he became known as a director who boldly embraced the new dynamic of sound. Having spent much of his childhood and adolescence in his native Austria, his command of German made him an ideal candidate for working at the new sound studios created by UFA.

In 1925, Paramount (where von Sternberg was under contract) had, along with MGM and Universal, injected capital into the German industry, and in return imported to

Hollywood some key talent, notably producer Erich Pommer and actor Emil Jannings.

Jannings was arguably (or absolutely, in his own opinion) Germany's number-one star, a burly man who specialised in heavy tragedy and bitter humiliation. Audiences worldwide had been awed by his downtrodden doorman in Murnau's *The Last Laugh* (1924), as well as imposing roles in *Waxworks* (1924) and *Variety* (1925). Of his work in Hollywood, only one complete film has survived, 1928's outstanding von Sternberg collaboration *The Last Command* (available on DVD in an excellent transfer from Criterion, along with *Underworld* and *The Docks of New York*), in which he plays a former Russian general who has escaped the Revolution and ended up an impoverished Hollywood extra. Picked out by a former revolutionary he once imprisoned who is now a successful film director, Jannings is promoted to playing himself in a Hollywood epic, and begins to mistake fiction for life.

Modelling himself on Erich von Stroheim, another Austrian-born Jewish director with a fake 'von' added to his name, von Sternberg on set dressed himself in boots and jodhpurs, carried a cane and insisted on silence when



*Emil Jannings was arguably
(or absolutely, in his own opinion)
Germany's number-one star*

he worked. His arrogance, which disguised an essentially shy disposition, was evidently too much for the demanding and insecure Jannings, and director and star vowed never to work together again. When the coming of sound effectively ended the actor's Hollywood career, the offer from Pommer to make the first German talking picture at UFA could hardly be resisted. And with Jannings winning the first ever Oscar for Best Performance in *The Last Command*, he and von Sternberg were willing to overlook their differences.

When a project about Rasputin fell through, Pommer and Jannings had the idea of adapting a novel by Heinrich Mann (brother of Thomas) entitled *Professor Unrat*. The main character, a teacher of English living in the port of Lubeck, is in fact called Rath, 'Unrat' – 'garbage' – being the nickname his unruly pupils give him. In the book, he falls for a dancer in a local tavern, loses his job, marries her and sets up a club which is in effect a brothel, then goes to pieces on discovering his wife's infidelity and is arrested.

Von Sternberg proposed a new storyline using only the first half of the book, concluding with the professor taking to the stage with his wife, now a singer named Lola Lola (with a nod to Wedekind's celebrated femme fatale Lulu), suffering appalling humiliation and dying in his old classroom back in Lubeck. Von Sternberg's conception was finely structured, so that Rath's pathetic decline was slyly foretold in the imagery of the film's opening scenes. The new title, *The Blue Angel*, was the name of the cabaret, which remains a brilliant creation – tawdry and grotesque, the smell of sweat, cigarettes and beer almost pouring off the screen.

Filming was only weeks away when the role of Lola Lola was finally filled. How and when Dietrich and von Sternberg became acquainted remains a tangle of conflicting memories (Dietrich's daughter Maria Riva says her mother kept changing the story right to the end of her life). Von Sternberg often declared that his image of the chanteuse was the kind of woman depicted – usually naked but for stockings and garters – in the paintings of Belgian decadent Félicien Rops. In his unreliable memoir *Fun in a Chinese Laundry*, the director recounts spotting Dietrich in a minor role in a play and noting her "impressive poise". Pommer was less impressed but agreed to a screen test, which is included on this release (it was discovered in the early 1990s, too late for poor Maximilian Schell, who claimed to have searched everywhere for it in his wacky 1984 portrait of the star, *Marlene*). Dietrich smokes, sings two songs accompanied by *The Blue Angel*'s composer Friedrich Hollander, and displays a rich talent for insolence. It seems that Jannings gave the final approval for her casting, possibly reassured that such a minor actress could hardly steal the film from him. But of course Dietrich's casual allure and self-possession would do exactly that, while the striving for effect visible in his acting has not dated well.

As part of the co-production deal, two versions of the film were shot simultaneously,



Dietrich's Lola Lola

one in German, the other in English, and both are on offer here. The German version is undeniably superior in its pacing and more refined integration of picture and sound (the prints available are also in much better shape). In the English version, Rath teaches his pupils using something close to the 'direct method', and Lola Lola is – in spite of her accent – apparently English herself, telling the professor, "Sorry, you're going to have to speak my language." Although this version is actually shorter than the German 'original', it seems longer, partly because of Jannings's painfully slow delivery in English. The other significant difference is that Dietrich's songs are rendered in translation, or rather with very different lyrics. 'Falling in Love Again' reverses the meaning of the original German, which

*When filming was finished,
Dietrich told her daughter:
"Thank God I will never have
to sing that awful song again"*



Von Sternberg with Emil Jannings

is 'I'm made for love' – a cynical celebration of lust, not a wistful ode to infatuation. (Pleasingly, the subtitles on the Blu-ray do follow the actual German, while those on the DVD still use 'Falling in Love Again').

As Tony Rayns points out in his lucid and very informative commentary track, the actual period of the film's story is curiously ambiguous. The streets are lit by gas lamps, suggesting the early years of the century as experienced by von Sternberg himself in Vienna (as Rayns notes, a tantalisingly brief scene was recently discovered from his 'lost' silent film *The Case of Lena Smith*, which recreated exactly that time and place). But indoors, electric spotlights are used for the cabaret, and eventually a calendar reveals that we are in the late 1920s.

The Blue Angel proved to be the final Paramount/UFA co-production, as the Wall Street Crash ended American investment in the German film industry. It was also the last time Jewish talent could be used so effectively in UFA, as the Nazis were on the rise. Dietrich signed with Paramount and left for Hollywood the day after *The Blue Angel* opened in Berlin, and in exile she would become a fervent anti-Nazi. Jannings meanwhile embraced Hitler's cause, colluded in the withdrawal of *The Blue Angel* on 'technical' grounds, and would never again be regarded as a major star outside his own country. (Tag Gallagher's new video essay provides a useful rundown on the film's personnel and their varied careers.)

This is for sure the best presentation yet available of *The Blue Angel*, even if it's evident that further restoration work could still be done. The shame is that the six extraordinary films subsequently made by von Sternberg with Dietrich for Paramount have yet to receive such loving attention. For in their delirium, extravagance and daring, they still rank among the greatest achievements in cinema. **S**



Publicity for the film's English-language release

New releases

BELOVED INFIDEL

Henry King; USA 1959; Twilight Time/Region 1
DVD: 123 minutes; Aspect Ratio 2.35:1; Features:
isolated score track, original theatrical trailer

Reviewed by Nick Pinkerton

F. Scott Fitzgerald first arrived in Hollywood in 1927, when he took a screen test, and he died there, no longer so beautiful, in 1940. The story of the Great American Novelist's failure to take hold in the movie colony – the lost screen credits and the aggrieved "I'm a good writer – honest" memo to Joseph Mankiewicz – hardly bears repetition. By 1959, however, the Fitzgerald revival was humming along, thanks in no small part to the memoir *Beloved Infidel: The Education of a Woman* by the English-born Hollywood gossip columnist Sheila Graham, Fitzgerald's companion in the last years of his life. These were roughly the years described in *The Disenchanted*, Budd Schulberg's thinly veiled reminiscence of researching a draft of *Winter Carnival* at Dartmouth College in 1939 alongside toper Fitzgerald. It was also at this time that Fitzgerald began his uncompleted *The Last Tycoon* and issued his squib-like Pat Hobby stories as revenge on Hollywood and himself.

Beloved Infidel made it to the screen by way of producer Jerry Wald, who was simultaneously cashing in on Faulkner, and was directed with CinemaScope pictorialism by Henry King, Fox's senescent director of prestige pictures, his principal distinguishing characteristic by then being his longevity. (King's last film would be his 1962 adaptation of Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night*.) Graham, an imposter gentrywoman who bluffs her way into a column, is played by Deborah Kerr, Fitzgerald by Gregory Peck. Although Peck is the right age and more than usually committed, the hale, hunky actor bears scant resemblance to the author; the only time I felt I was actually looking at Fitzgerald on screen was when he was laid out on the floor of Graham's bungalow, dead.

The main attraction, then, is Kerr, whose work in Preminger's *Bonjour tristesse* (1958) was recently made available by Twilight Time in a beautiful Blu-ray. Here again Kerr serves her signature dish, a primness quivering with strained emotion, and she is deeply empathetic in scenes of both slack romantic release and rigid humiliation at Fitzgerald's hands. As for the town that Fitzgerald loved and loathed as much as did his friend Nathanael West (who died returning there for Scott's funeral), Hollywood is scarcely a recognisable character in *Beloved Infidel* – *The Day of the Locust* it ain't.

Disc: The transfer gives new lightness to the romanticised Californian vistas arranged by cinematographer Leon Shamroy.

THE CONFRONTATION

Miklós Jancsó; Hungary 1968; Second Run/
Region 0 DVD; Certificate U; 78 minutes; Aspect
Ratio 2.35:1 anamorphic; Features: booklet

Reviewed by Michael Brooke

Just as Miklós Jancsó's breakthrough *The Round-Up* (1966) can be interpreted as an allegorical portrait of the aftermath of the 1956 Hungarian uprising, so it's hard to separate his first colour film from the *événements* of May 1968, since it

was made in their wake and is about student political agitation. But it's set in 1947, when the young Jancsó was himself involved in campaigning for greater access to university education for the masses, a theme that hasn't exactly become irrelevant in post-2010 Britain.

This being a Jancsó film, it's hardly a crude political polemic. In fact, it was the first of a quartet that he made between 1968 and 1971 (the others being *Winter Wind*, *Agnus Dei* and the masterly *Red Psalm*) in which he refined his by now instantly recognisable style. His virtuoso choreography of the camera and dozens of performers was already well established, but *The Confrontation* was where his reputation as a long-take specialist really began, and there are so many thematically apposite songs performed on screen that it could almost qualify as a musical, albeit with lengthy political discussions in between numbers. Although the film was shot on location in the ancient town of Veszprém, its use of colour is as stylised as any studio concoction, especially the constant splashes of red via shirts, banners and female lead Jutka's hair.

Jutka is the scorched-earth revolutionary, while her initial comrade-in-rhetoric Laci is the conciliator. It's an increasingly volatile partnership whose fissures prove both irreconcilable and inevitable, as the expulsions, denunciations and ritualised humiliations of the film's many confrontations become ever more internalised. Jancsó seems both sympathetic and intensely critical, as though examining his own youthful idealism from a 21-year vantage point. He'd have made a very different film in 1947, but almost certainly a far less resonant one.

Disc: Sourced from the Hungarian National Film Archive's 2011 restoration, the image isn't entirely blemish-free but nonetheless advances on Mokép's non-anamorphic Hungarian DVD (the only rival edition), which in any case doesn't have English subtitles. By contrast, Second Run's translation is as conscientious as ever, sharing Jancsó's evident belief that song lyrics are as important and eloquent as spoken dialogue. Sadly, there are no on-disc extras, but longstanding Jancsó expert Graham Petrie contributes a lengthy booklet essay that offers both a detailed analysis of the film and an overview of its creator's career.



Student politics: 'The Confrontation'

CUT TO THE CHASE! THE CHARLEY CHASE COLLECTION

USA 1924-26; Milestone Film & Video/Region
1 DVD; 303 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.33:1

Reviewed by Nick Pinkerton

For a long time the world of American silent comedy was winnowed down to the polarity of Chaplin and Keaton. In the past decade, a third name, that of Harold Lloyd, has joined those giants, the renewal of interest in him abetted by the DVD rerelease of high-quality restorations of his works and accompanying international retrospectives highlighting new prints. Can a Charley Chase rediscovery be far behind?

It cannot be said that Chase's knockabout coordination or innate athletic grace approached those of the men mentioned above, but he was an ingenious gag-man, and snidely hilarious. His character – first named Jimmie Jump, then plain old Charley Chase – is a dapper young man with a sprig of a moustache above a pert, cross mouth. He is tall but looks taller for his thinness, his long bandy legs his principal attribute for performing physical comedy.

What is most immediately striking about Chase is how little he simpers for the camera. He frequently plays a coward, and displays a barely suppressed petulant nastiness that sometimes recalls Basil Fawlty. Though he's an upstanding young man when a-courting, his grin drops drastically when unobserved, and he is forever in the process of wiping a sour scowl off his face just in time to escape detection, shooting rancid looks at the camera as if to say, "Isn't life terrible?" Which is, in fact, the name of one of the better shorts here, which has Charley heading off on a spit-and-paste cruise ship to the Tabasco Islands with his wife (Katherine Grant), her brother (Oliver Hardy, also much present on this set, billed as 'Babe Hardy') and the little black girl they have absently picked up at the dock instead of their own child.

Chase was born Charles Joseph Parrott in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1893. His work as a teenaged vaudevillian segued into a career in movies, and through the 1910s he was a bit-part player and director at Mack Sennett's Keystone Pictures, moving eventually to Hal Roach Studios as a director, where he handled some early *Our Gang* shorts. This 'Milestone Cinematheque' collection concentrates on films from Chase's tenure in Culver City, when he stepped in front of the camera again, replacing his own brother James in a foundering series of shorts; there are 16 films here, mostly two-reelers, with a couple of early one-reelers thrown in. Later known for classics like *Love Affair* and *Make Way for Tomorrow*, the 25-year-old Leo McCarey would shortly join the Jump/Chase films as director, working in collaboration with Chase, whom McCarey credited with teaching him the ropes of filmmaking.

Where Chaplin's outlook was essentially Victorian, and deadpan Keaton – so beloved by Beckett – was one of cinema's first capital-m Modernists, Chase, like Lloyd, belongs very much in the mainstream of his own bustling era. These shorts abound with flappers and bootleggers, vice raids



STANLEY GETS STARTED

Kubrick dismissed his debut feature as a “bumbling, amateur” affair – but ‘Fear and Desire’ is full of the director’s characteristic flair and image-making skill

FEAR AND DESIRE

Stanley Kubrick; USA 1953; Eureka/Masters of Cinema/Region B Blu-ray and Region 2 DVD Dual Format; (also Kino Lorber/Region A Blu-ray/Region 1 DVD); Certificate 12; 62 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.37:1; Features (Eureka): short films (‘Day of the Fight’, ‘Flying Padre’, ‘The Seafarers’), video discussion, booklet. Features (Kino): ‘The Seafarers’

Reviewed by Michael Brooke

Luis Buñuel once joked (or did he?) that he would gladly torch every extant copy of his work, but Stanley Kubrick really did facilitate the suppression of two of his own films. The withdrawal of *A Clockwork Orange* from UK circulation (1973-2000) is well known, but his debut feature *Fear and Desire* has been much less accessible anywhere, and when New York’s Film Forum screened the only known 35mm print (legally) in 1994, he publicly denounced it as “a bumbling, amateur film exercise”. Most people had to make do with bootlegs sourced from smeary nth-generation VHS, which did the film’s cinematography (by far its strongest suit) no favours whatever.

Fear and Desire was the third in a quartet of films that preceded *Killer’s Kiss* (1955), until now the oldest Kubrick title in commercial circulation. Kubrick’s professional career began with a five-year stint as a staff photographer for the bi-weekly *Look* magazine, and his self-financed debut short *Day of the Fight* (1951) developed organically from this. A portrait of Bronx-born middleweight boxer Walter Cartier (1922-95) and his twin brother/manager/trainer Vincent, it effectively showcases Kubrick’s eye for milieus and for incongruous, naggingly memorable detail, with the Cartiers’ devout Catholicism providing as many visual opportunities as the climactic bout itself.

It secured Kubrick a commission to make *Flying Padre* (1951) for RKO-Pathé’s *Screenliner* newsreel series. This charming portrait of a New Mexico-based priest who traverses his far-flung parish by light aircraft is less obviously Kubrick’s work, but it’s well shot (the flying sequences, the close-ups of parishioners’ faces) and packs a lot into ten minutes. However, the voiceover is an intrusive liability, galumphingly spelling out what could be better conveyed exclusively visually.

Fear and Desire was a big step forward: not just Kubrick’s first feature, but his first serious cinematic statement. In fact, it’s an almost perfect example of an overconfident debut by a young man (Kubrick was just 22 when filming started in 1951) with evidently huge creative ambitions – there are clear filmic nods to Eisenstein and Kurosawa, plus many literary



Unknown soldiers: Stanley Kubrick’s little-seen psychological war study ‘Fear and Desire’

allusions – but without the technical and life experience to bring them off with conviction. Although its original distributor Joseph Burstyn breathlessly called it “an American art picture without any artiness”, it is very comfortably the most self-consciously arty film that Kubrick would make until 2001: *A Space Odyssey* in 1968.

On the other hand, for a reported shooting budget of \$9,000, it looks very impressive indeed. Limited resources may have dictated the primary forest location, the constant recourse to extreme close-ups of faces and the comparative lack of camera movement (certainly in comparison to what came later), but Kubrick nonetheless shows plenty of real cinematic flair even at this early stage, supported by his already demonstrable skill as an image-maker.

Set in an unspecified country at a time of war, the film is a psychological study of a quartet of soldiers (Frank Silvera, Kenneth Harp, Steve Coit, future director Paul Mazursky) who have crash-landed behind enemy lines with no realistic expectation of external support. The fear is palpable throughout, blended with desire during the film’s most immediately compelling sequence, where the soldiers capture a female hostage (Virginia Leith) and don’t know what to do with her: they lack a common language,

It’s an almost perfect example of an overconfident debut by a young man with evidently huge creative ambitions

and her face is inscrutably and threateningly defiant. In fact, the film’s overall tone is consistently and remarkably bleak, perhaps the clearest foreshadowing of the director’s later work in general and his war films (*Paths of Glory*, *Dr Strangelove*, *Full Metal Jacket*) in particular.

The Seafarers (1953) was the only film that Kubrick made purely for money, which he needed to pay off the feature’s debts. A half-hour promo for the Seafarers International Union, it presumably fulfilled its brief but it’s impossible to guess its director unforeshadowed. There’s been some auteurist highlighting of the sideways tracking shot across the SIU canteen, but its wobbly hesitancy only vaguely resembles its swift and decisive counterparts in later Kubrick films. Put bluntly, it’s the equivalent of Krzysztof Kieslowski’s *Principles of Safety and Hygiene in a Copper Mine* (1972) and its rewards are just as limited.

All current video editions are fuelled by the Library of Congress’s high-definition restorations of *Fear and Desire* and *The Seafarers*. Minor blemishes aside, the main feature looks great and sounds even better – the post-synched soundtrack has its aesthetic drawbacks but is impeccably clear. Although *The Seafarers* (Kubrick’s first colour film) is grainy and faded, that reflects its spotty preservation history. While those transfers comprise the whole of Kino Lorber’s edition, Eureka adds the other shorts (from standard-definition videotape, but better than nothing) and some valuable contextual discussion. Kubrick completists, look no further. ☺

New releases

and spiritualist séances. *Mama Behave* features Charleston-dancing and a speakeasy, as well as Charley taking liberties with his own wife while he's disguised as his twin brother, a situation refined in the great burlesque *Mighty Like a Moose* (1926), in which a married couple unknowingly have an affair with one another after cosmetic surgery renders each unrecognisable to their spouse. More risqué than his comic contemporaries, Charley is forever placing himself in potentially humiliating situations in which he must undertake frantic acts of concealment, hiding another woman or a stray camisole from a jealous wife, often with the connivance of a butler; or, in *Charley, My Boy* (1926), hiding hooch from a Volunteer Volstead League informer, finally smuggling it in the sloshing, ballooned bottoms of his plus-fours. (Future documentarians seeking irreverent footage to illustrate the rampant hypocrisy of the 1920s, look no further.)

Charley has no fixed character – he may be a striving young man after the girl in one film, a long-suffering bourgeois husband in the next (indeed, all his husbands are long-suffering). In *The Uneasy Three* (1925), one of six shorts appearing for the first time on DVD here, Charley even plays a criminal who stoops to kidnapping. He delights in violating social boundaries, be it 'adopting' the black girl in *Isn't Life Terrible?* or, in *Bad Boy* (1925), playing a fruity Pan at his arriviste mother's garden party before dressing as a plug-ugly mug to descend into a dancehall and shimmy hysterically with his waitress girlfriend.

Chase, who died in 1940, weathered the jump to sound but never convincingly crossed into features. At the end of his life he was producing two-reelers for Columbia (released this January as part of Sony Entertainment's made-to-order Columbia Choice Collection). This failure may prevent him from joining the ranks of the major silent comics – but there's ample evidence here that he is the most major of the minors.

Disc: While it can't claim to be the comprehensive Chase collection, *Cut to the Chase!* fills some holes left by previous Region 1 releases: two volumes from Kino, and VCI Entertainment's 2009 collection *Becoming Charley Chase*. Milestone's collection is the only one to be presented windowboxed – the image quality is in no case a great leap forward – and each short is presented with new scorings, of which those contributed by Donald Sosin are far and away the best.

FILMS BY JESS FRANCO

THE GIRL FROM RIO

Germany/Spain 1969; Mediumrare Entertainment/Region 2; Certificate 18; 94 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.66:1; Features: interviews with Jess Franco and Shirley Eaton

THE BLOODY JUDGE

US; 1970; Mediumrare Entertainment/Region 2; Certificate 18; 89 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.66:1; Features: interviews with Jess Franco and Christopher Lee, deleted scenes, trailer

Reviewed by Vic Pratt

Jess Franco's notoriety as a purveyor of 1970s Euro-porno should not be allowed to obscure his gifts as a resourceful,

imaginative, visually creative filmmaker. *The Girl from Rio* (1969) and *The Bloody Judge* (1970), international co-productions concocted by Franco and British producer Harry Alan Towers, amply demonstrate the director's ability to produce dynamic exploitation cinema, showcasing his skill for wringing every pennyworth of onscreen value from the most modest of budgets.

Influenced by Michael Reeves's *Witchfinder General* (1968), which saw Vincent Price unwillingly cajoled into playing it splendidly straight as real-life English Civil War inquisitor Matthew Hopkins, Franco too turned to the British history books for *The Bloody Judge*. Christopher Lee portrays the sadistic 17th-century figure Judge Jeffreys, dispensing grisly death to political opponents and young women who spurn his advances. There's witch-burning aplenty and more ingenious torture devices than you can shake a thumbscrew at, as a menacing Lee – obviously glad to be free of Dracula's cape, and having done his research – manages to convince as a man who, however misguided, believes that he's doing the right thing. A sense of time and place is intermittently nicely evoked but ruptured, inevitably, by the late-1960s false eyelashes and bouffants of the well-corseted young witches, and *The Bloody Judge*, beautifully shot and dreamlike as it is, is of course more psychedelic European sexploitation flick than serious historical drama of Ye Olde England. There is much torture, whipping, unlikely sensual moaning of women in chains, and some export-only German-subtitled light lesbianism in the castle dungeons. It all falls somewhere between Reeves's prototype and the lurid excesses of Michael Armstrong's *Mark of the Devil* (1970).

The Girl from Rio is a comic-strip-style thriller adapted from the Sumuru books of stiff-upper-lip novelist Sax Rohmer, creator of Dr Fu Manchu, and influenced by Bond and *Barbarella*. It is not as lavish a production as these costlier predecessors. Shirley Eaton plays Sumuru, a supervillainess with a hatred of men, ruler of the women-only city of Femina (which looks suspiciously like a disused airport terminal adjoining a car park), guarded by her army of mini-skirted acolytes. Jeff Sutton (square-jawed Richard Wyler) falls into Sumuru's clutches and – unaccountably spurning her advances – is subjected to sinister torture. Alas, the limitations of the budget are somewhat apparent: Sumuru's miniscule circular swinger bed is unerotically surrounded by a grubby shower curtain; her few girl soldiers are carefully spread about to fill as much set as possible; and her laser-beam torture device fires no laser beams (creditably, Wyler writhes around manfully nonetheless). Franco is nothing if not ingenious: the destruction of Sumuru's city is conveyed not through explosions but by shaking the camera around a bit while a yellow smoke canister is deployed. *The Girl from Rio* is another reminder of Franco's skill at gathering the disparate strands of an unwieldy international co-production into a cohesive, entertaining, stylish whole.

Disc: Both releases feature enjoyably concise interviews with lead players and Franco.

FROM BEYOND

Stuart Gordon; UK 1986; Second Sight/Region B Blu-ray and 2 DVD; Certificate 18; 86 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.85:1; Features: commentary, interviews, storyboards

Reviewed by Kim Newman

Following the success of his 1985 debut feature



Cut to the Chase! The Charley Chase Collection
Snidely hilarious, he displays a barely suppressed petulant nastiness that recalls Basil Fawcett

Re-Animator, Stuart Gordon reunited many of his collaborators from that movie and spun another H.P. Lovecraft story into this very 1980s horror film – which melds flesh-stretching imagery, fetish sex, black comedy and transcendental cosmic terror into an old-dark-house thrill-ride. Lovecraft's brief anecdote is exhausted before the opening credits, as Crawford Tillinghast (Jeffrey Combs), assistant to mad scientist Dr Pretorius (Ted Sorel), barely survives an experiment with a gizmo that uses giant tuning forks and a distinctive purple-pink disco light to stimulate the pineal gland and reveal another dimension which intersects with our reality but is aswarm with tentacular, mawed, malign entities. Repressed Dr McMichael (Barbara Crampton) unwisely takes her patient Tillinghast back to Pretorius's house to relive the trauma; she becomes obsessed with turning the machine on, thus awakening her own hidden desire to dress in leather lingerie and summoning the transformed, slime-swathed Pretorius to give voice to cracked philosophy.

Less achieved than the farcical *Re-Animator*, *From Beyond* is worth revisiting for its ambitious themes – it takes the torch from David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* and passes it to Clive Barker's *Hellraiser*, prompting sociopsychological musing on why exactly cosmic horror in the 80s was always yoked to sadomasochist dress-up. The film is also worth noting for the unusual way it scrambles genre conventions, making the buttoned-down, obsessive McMichael (whose motto is "there's always more to see") the real mad scientist – she drives the plot while Tillinghast, who eventually grows a penile third eye from his pineal, and Pretorius, who transforms into an amorphous blob, become the nagging spirits holding her back or urging her on.

Disc: An interesting commentary from Gordon, Crampton and Combs and producer Brian Yuzna, offering production anecdote and exploring the film's relationship with Lovecraft; also interviews with makeup personnel, screenwriter Dennis Paoli and others.

FROM THE SEA TO THE LAND BEYOND

Penny Woolcock; UK 2012; BFI/Region 0 DVD; Certificate U; 73 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.33:1; Features: 'Making the Sea and the Land Beyond'; footage of British Sea Power in rehearsal, short films ('SS Saxonia in Liverpool', 'Cunard Mail Steamer Lucania Leaving for America', 'Beside the Seaside', 'Worker's Weekend', 'Callers Herrin'), film and location identification track, essay booklet

Reviewed by Kate Stables

Compilation films are at their most powerful when they push the big-subject buttons – *Body Song* singing the body electric, or *The Atomic Café's* Cold War capers. Yet Penny Woolcock's elegant, evocative film portrait of the British coastline, a commentary-free collage of footage beachcombed from the BFI archives and washed in a plangent soundtrack by British Sea Power, packs a surprising emotional punch. For any British viewer reared on bracing coastal breaks, watching Mitchell and Kenyon's excited Edwardian Blackpool crowds, Marion



The old wave: 'From the Sea to the Land Beyond'

Grierson's 1930s rock-pool POVs of children at play or John Taylor's 1950s Kodachrome-bright holidaymakers is a positive Proustian rush.

As British Sea Power's score drifts from crooning melancholy to martial crash (the owl-eared can pick out reworked hits like 'Carrión' and 'Bear', somehow appropriate alongside the repurposed footage), one does wonder whether a DVD viewing can rival the impact of the original screen event (it premiered at the 2012 Sheffield Doc/Fest with a live score). But previous Woolcock documentaries and dramas such as the *Tina* trilogy made tough social points, and the small screen amps up this piece's shrewd qualities as well as its meditative ones. She turns a gimlet eye on the rapid changes in social, industrial and even film history – it's not only the coastline that is transforming or eroding here. Weaving her footage chronologically into fluid, poetic chapters, she examines everything from poignant WW1 war-games to lifeboat rescues; registers the 20th-century waxing and waning of fishing fleets, mining and oil platforms; and swoops on shy wildlife and on Martin Parr's camera-hogging gos trippers. Mostly wearing its opinions lightly and trusting viewers to create their own internal narrative, the film becomes thriller in its last layers, cutting knowingly between Edwardian innocence and 80s Canary Wharf excess.

Wreathed in nostalgia but mocking itself for it, a seaside symphony and a sideways look at 'our island story' combined, this is a very British film in every sense.

Disc: An excellent transfer, the craft and clarity of the earlier films making you wince at the pixelated horrors of the later video footage. There are nicely detailed interviews with the creative team, though the real gems are the selected archive shorts (*Drifters* fans should check out *Callers Herrin*) packaged with new introductions by Woolcock.

IT'S IN THE BAG

Richard Wallace; USA 1945; Olive Films/Region 1 NTSC DVD; 87 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.37:1

Reviewed by Michael Atkinson

A vaudeville vet, Fred Allen was one of American radio's biggest stars for two decades straight – from the first days of the Depression into the 1950s – but his film appearances were few and today he's all but forgotten. This quick-witted, eccentric and altogether disarming farce was in fact his only starring vehicle, and it's saturated with his personality: acidic, darkly cynical and blithely absurd. (Allen was one of the writers too, and regulars from his radio shows pop in, including Yiddishe schtick mistress Minerva Pious.)

Though he was an icon in his day, Allen's humour feels years ahead of its time – no one in the 1940s was cracking jokes this nervy, bitter and topical, and no one made them at his own expense as frequently or as deftly as Allen. (He makes sport here of his own ugliness and revels in his petty-minded greed.) He starts the movie with a direct address to the audience, mocking the "boring" credits as they go by – "Who knows who any of these people are? Who cares? You can find names like these in any phone book." (When it gets to the screenwriting card, he comments: "These four people are now out of work. You'll see why in just a minute.") The story he uses – unofficially – is Ilf and Petrov's *The Twelve Chairs*, with the titular items hiding mythical riches left to Allen's flea-circus manager, then sold off accidentally and laboriously hunted down.

The scenario allows Allen to concoct a variety of set pieces, all of which are as random as comedy sketches in a revue, and to fold in a plethora of guest stars, including Jack Benny (with whom Allen had a years-long and completely tongue-in-cheek media feud), William Bendix, Don Ameche and Rudy Vallee, everybody digging each other with perfectly straight faces and tossing in-jokes like tennis balls. Perhaps the film's most dazzling non sequitur is an epic comic passage in which Allen and his equally dyspeptic wife (Binnie Barnes) try to find a seat in a vast, people-packed, multi-tiered cinema, getting so lost in the balconies and elevators and double-talking bureaucracy that the very act of trying to see a movie becomes a timeless, Kafkaesque sojourn. Director Richard Wallace, a signature-less B-lister, plays it all with a speed and sharpness the similarly winking-modernist *Road* movies would envy, but it's Allen's show, and maybe the funniest Hollywood one-off of the middle-century.

Disc: A fine archival print.

THE LICKERISH QUARTET

Radley Metzger; USA/Italy 1970; Arrow Films/Region-free Blu-ray and DVD Dual Format; Certificate 18; 88 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.85:1 (DVD anamorphic); Features: commentary, featurettes ('Mind Games', 'Cool Version Love Scenes', 'Giving Voice to the Quartet'), multiple trailers, booklet

Reviewed by Michael Brooke

Like the Polish-born Walerian Borowczyk, NYC native Radley Metzger decamped to Western Europe in the 1960s, in



HEAVEN AND HELL

Three decades after it enraged critics and bombed at the box office, Michael Cimino's flawed epic deserves to be reassessed

HEAVEN'S GATE

Michael Cimino/USA 1980/Criterion/Region A/V1 Blu-ray and DVD; 216 minutes; Aspect Ratio 2.20:1; Features: audio interview with Michael Cimino and producer Joann Carelli, new interviews with Kris Kristofferson, soundtrack arranger David Mansfield and second assistant director Michael Stevenson, trailer, booklet

Reviewed by Tom Charity

Time to re-evaluate *Heaven's Gate*? The film – in its latest digital restoration – was feted at the Venice and New York film festivals last autumn in the presence of writer-director Michael Cimino (the real one, not the cheeky imposter who had Twitter all abuzz in December), and now comes the Criterion Blu-ray edition to seal the deal, with a new 216-minute running time reflecting the removal of the two-minute intermission.

The Criterion imprimatur counts for a lot, and on this occasion the company has virtually left it at that, throwing in a few interviews (including Kris Kristofferson and Cimino) but little more, perhaps sensing that it's time the movie spoke for itself, stripped of all the brouhaha and baggage that arguably led to its sorry fate at the hands of the US press in the first place. (For myself, I'm sorry Criterion hasn't included Michael Epstein's 2004 documentary *Final Cut: The Making and Unmaking of Heaven's Gate*, if only to counterbalance the influence of former United Artists executive Steven Bach's fascinating but one-sided book of the same name.)

Bach's narrative has been dominant for the past quarter of a century, and indicts the hubris of the 40-year-old Cimino for the demise of the studio (UA), the western, and even the Hollywood auteur film (alongside the excesses of Coppola, Friedkin, Spielberg, Leone and others, to be sure). But there is another way of looking at this. As Kristofferson suggests in Epstein's documentary, perhaps *Heaven's Gate* "was used by the powers that be to stop a way of filmmaking, where the author was the director and was in control of the money". That film critics were instrumental in this endeavour is a source of deep regret.

Of course in Europe it's always had its advocates – in the UK, *Time Out* has championed the film doggedly over the years, from Tom Milne's original defence of a "majestic and lovingly detailed" western through subsequent revivals. It's a cultural distinction perhaps: the Brits embrace the misunderstood underdog, while the Americans flush a fiasco out of their system. I vividly remember visiting the set of Keith Gordon's *The Singing Detective* and the chill that went through

the room when I mentioned my admiration for Herbert Ross's flop *Pennies from Heaven* – as if failure were contagious (perhaps it was).

But this brings us to another specific culture clash played out within the film itself and in its reception at home and abroad: its politics, which inspired the critic Robin Wood to place it "among the supreme achievements of the Hollywood cinema". As Milne pointed out, Cimino charts the disintegration of a complacent, patrician, Anglo-Saxon vision expressed in the valedictorian address read by Billy Irvine (John Hurt) at Harvard (in rhyming couplets, no less): there's little need for change in a world "on the whole, well arranged".

Mirroring the dramatic cut from the innocence of a Pennsylvania mining town to a hellish Vietnam in *The Deer Hunter* – you might even say apologising for it – Cimino drags his Harvard grads forward 20 years, and west, to Wyoming 1892, where angry cattle barons have hired a mercenary vigilante force of 'regulators' to assassinate European immigrant dirt farmers who have been poaching from their herds. Only Hurt's alcoholic writer Billy and his old classmate Jim Averill (Kristofferson), the local marshal, see anything amiss in this strategy. A class traitor, as it appears to his peers, Averill returns to warn the homesteaders and stands beside them when the shooting starts.

This certainly seems apposite in the age of Occupy versus the One Percent, but the conflict between stockgrowers and homesteaders is a western staple (see *Shane* and *Pat Garrett and*

What works best in the movie, what's truly rich and alive, are those lyrical passages where – in plot terms – nothing happens


Billy the Kid for equally anti-business scenarios). Cimino's story is less unusual for its historical grounding in the Johnson County War, or even for its populist, quasi-Marxist sentiments, than for its 'European' art-film characteristics: the director's decision to privilege mood and atmosphere – landscape and community – over narrative drive; his insistence on the babble of foreign (unsubtitled) Eastern European and Jewish voices among the immigrants; and his attempts to bring in multiple character viewpoints (Isabelle Huppert as Jim's prostitute companion Ella, Christopher Walken as Nate Champion, Jeff Bridges as the saloon keeper).

By conventional Hollywood tenets, *Heaven's Gate* is simply an example of bad storytelling – a common refrain in reviews even today. But it's easy to see how Cimino developed these strategies from his experience with *The Deer Hunter*, and surmise the influence of films such as *The Leopard*, *Days of Heaven* and the Vilmos Zsigmond-photographed *McCabe & Mrs Miller*. Revisionist genre movies were ten a penny in 1970s westerns, but few went so far against the narrative grain, and while *Heaven's Gate* seems to me flawed (Cimino himself has said he wanted more time to fine-tune the edit – some of the dialogue is muffled, the climax underwhelming), it's important to recognise that what works best in the movie, what's truly rich, evocative and alive, are those lyrical, romantic passages where – in plot terms – almost nothing happens: Jim and Ella's ride through town in her new gig; the graduation dance and subsequent mock battle (which foreshadows the bloodbath at the end); and above all the lovely Fordian rollerskating sequence, a folksy waltz celebrating community and love which takes place in the tented hall that gives this grand and yearning un-American epic its name. 🍷



Un-American hero: Kris Kristofferson as marshal Jim Averill

New releases

 search of a more congenial environment in which to indulge in artistically ambitious forays into big-screen erotica, with both filmmakers venturing into hardcore territory as the anything-goes 1970s progressed (Metzger's 1975 *Pygmalion*-plus-penetration opus *The Opening of Misty Beethoven* recently made its US Blu-ray debut).

Two years before *Deep Throat* tickled the fancies of the chatterati, *The Lickerish Quartet* was considered daringly graphic for a 35mm film with proper actors and decent (partly Cinecittà-shot) production values, though it's of primary interest now for its self-conscious aesthetic and conceptual nods to European art movies like *Last Year at Marienbad* and *Teorema*.

Set largely in a lavishly appointed chateau, the film concerns a man (Frank Wolff), his wife (Erika Remberg) and her (but not his) grown-up son (Paolo Turco), who decide that a local carnival performer (Silvana Venturilli) is the living spit of the bisexual woman in the 16mm stag film they've been viewing (and deriding) as decadent family entertainment. Luring her into their home with the intention of confronting her with a notionally disreputable past, they run the projector... but while the film's narrative is the same, her face is no longer visible.

At this point we've entered decidedly familiar illusion-versus-reality territory (this is by no means the stag film's last mutation), but while Venturilli's subsequent systematic seduction of her hosts amply delivers on the titillation front, these sequences are unusually well integrated into the overall texture, combining stylised sets (the library with its floor covered with dictionary definitions of sexual terms), alfresco coupling and an oddly moving lesbian seduction that seems more concerned with conveying the private pleasure of the participants than pandering to the viewer's voyeurism.

Disc: A few specks aside, the source print is in very good shape, and the excellent high-definition transfer also fuelled the US Cult Epics release. Its extras have been ported over, including a chatty, informative director's commentary and over half an hour of scenes from the softer alternative edit – though their level of interest may be neatly gauged by Metzger's blithe admission that he never bothered to sit through them himself.

ONCE UPON A TIME IN AMERICA

Sergio Leone; USA 1983; Warner Bros/Region-free Blu-ray and DVD; 251 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.85:1

Reviewed by David Thompson

Unveiled in 2012 at the Cannes and Locarno festivals, this longer edition of Sergio Leone's final film – one whose distribution was famously troubled – seemed to offer the fulfilment of a dream. In production, Leone had hoped that his gangster epic might be divided into two parts, but after the financial failure of Bertolucci's *1900*, not to mention the debacle of *Heaven's Gate*, no American distributor was prepared to release a film over three hours long. Eventually, Europe saw a 228-minute version (apparently still shorter than the director really wished for), while in the US Leone's



Undressed for dinner: 'The Lickerish Quartet'

elaborate flashback structure was unravelled and the film re-edited in chronological order to run at 165 minutes, in which form it failed both critically and at the box office.

That travesty has long since vanished, and the acclaimed 'European' cut has already been made available on DVD and Blu-ray. Mysteriously, although the longer 2012 version has now been withdrawn by the Leone family (who own the rights for Italy) and the Cineteca di Bologna for further work and the possible addition of more missing scenes, this new Italian disc release offers us that same festival cut, which features 26 minutes of rediscovered footage. The presence of these sections is clearly signalled by their lack of definition, full colour and muddy sound. So what do they offer that's new?

Leone's film, drenched in his favourite themes of memory, obsession, friendship and death, was based on *The Hoods*, Harry Grey's semi-autobiographical account of a group of Jewish gangsters growing up in 1920s New York and riding the Prohibition wave until its repeal at the end of 1933. The director's meeting with the ageing, withdrawn author of the book inspired him to devise a screenplay in which the action constantly shifts from one time period to another. The hero Noodles (Robert De Niro) returns to New York in 1968 to follow clues suggesting that his closest buddy Max (James Woods) didn't die in the massacre of their gang 35 years earlier. With its framing device of Noodles taking time out in an opium haze, the film has often been interpreted as the feverish dream of its principal character, imagining how the future might turn out and reflecting on the past with deep melancholy. The new scenes neither negate nor support this interpretation, though their lack of visual definition arguably adds another druggy layer of texture to the film. Certainly they help clarify plot points and give us the opportunity to see Noodles's great lost love Deborah (Elizabeth McGovern) proving her stage talent as Shakespeare's Cleopatra. The film's notorious rape scene is now bookended by a conversation between Noodles and his chauffeur (played by producer Arnon Milchan) reflecting on their Jewishness, and Noodles's drunken first encounter with Eve (Darlanne Fluegel). We witness the older Noodles in 1968 meeting the cemetery director played by Louise Fletcher, making clearer why his name appears on a plaque he never commissioned. And at the mysterious

party towards the end of the film, the later incarnation of Max as Senator Bailey is found in a tense confrontation with union boss Jimmy Conway (Treat Williams); their conversation provides further motivation for the former mobster to effect another disappearing act.

As in his westerns, Leone's vision of the American crime world is strongly filtered through movie legend, and for all his professed research he was ultimately no more interested in the protagonists' actual ethnicity than in the complex merging of organised crime and politics in the 1930s. *Once upon a Time in America*'s greatness always came from its extraordinary cinematic sweep, and these rediscovered scenes unquestionably add to the thematic richness of Leone's achievement. But this is all clearly just one stage in an ongoing restoration project.

Disc: Overall, a paler transfer than the previous effort and, as noted above, the extra scenes are of a distinctly poorer quality, both in picture and sound. Controversially, the entire film has been compressed on to one disc, with no extras.

SOMETHING WILD

Jack Garfein; USA 1961; MGM Limited Edition Collection/Region-free DVD; 113 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.33:1

Reviewed by David Thompson

Not to be confused with the Jonathan Demme 'yuppie nightmare' movie of 1986, the 'something wild' in this monochrome independent US film is a more ambiguous affair. Director Jack Garfein and his wife Carroll Baker, both alumni of the Actors Studio who managed to fall foul of the Strasberg clan, made the movie mainly on the streets of New York. Their sweaty vision of an often malevolent city was brilliantly photographed by the veteran Eugen Schüfftan (who had worked with Lang, L'Herbier and Ophüls and did extraordinary work in Franju's *Eyes Without a Face* and Rossen's *The Hustler*). The film was also blessed with a score by no less a composer than Aaron Copland (his first such assignment for 12 years – he later recycled much of it into his suite 'Music for a Great City') and a credits sequence by Saul Bass, who amplified his use of the dynamic architectural lines of Manhattan employed in *North by Northwest* into a visual symphony of neon lights, racing cars and bustling people.

In spite of this artistic heavy artillery, *Something Wild* was a flop and virtually disappeared until its recent restoration and the arrival of this (on-demand) DVD. The film divided critics and left most audiences confused – if not severely troubled – by its narrative.

Baker (who was keen at this time to escape her glamorous Hollywood image) plays Mary Ann, a young student who on her way home from the subway is brutally raped by a stranger. Finding it impossible to communicate with her self-absorbed mother and stepfather, she keeps her trauma to herself, and then on impulse abandons college life to take refuge in a dingy apartment and work at Woolworth's. Tormented by her fellow workers for her distance, she contemplates suicide but is saved by awkward if seemingly kind garage mechanic Mike (Ralph Meeker, famous

New releases



for his brutal performance in *Kiss Me Deadly*). Here the movie changes gear into a hostage situation, with most of the action taking place in Mike's basement after he locks Mary Ann in, evidently in the hope that she will become his life partner. She despairs of escaping his clutches, but the resolution of her plight has seemed to many – including this viewer – less than psychologically compelling. Clearly Garfein and his cast saw the film as a bold and challenging investigation of a woman's response to rape, but all too often what occurs on the screen feels closer to an actor's workshop on a symbolic battle of the sexes.

Disc: A satisfactory transfer of a good, if not perfect, print. No extras.

THE TITFIELD THUNDERBOLT

Charles Crichton; UK 1953; StudioCanal/Region B Blu-ray/Region 2 DVD; Certificate U; 84 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.37:1; Features: documentaries, location footage, archive audio interviews, stills gallery, restoration comparison, trailer

Reviewed by Michael Brooke

As its twee title signals in advance, this is the cosiest and most (small-c) conservative of the major Ealing comedies, with little of the steel that Alexander Mackendrick flashed in its companions *The Man in the White Suit* (1951) and *The Ladykillers* (1955). While there are very occasional reminders of the quasi-revolutionary satire of earlier T.E.B. Clarke-scripted films such as *Passport to Pimlico* (1949) and *The Lavender Hill Mob* (1951), the would-be subversives here have very different motivations: far from challenging rationing or the banks, they seek to preserve their gentle rural lifestyle in Technicolored aspic. Even when they mount a direct challenge to the Ministry of Transport over its decision to close down their beloved branch line, they make sure that they stick within official operating guidelines, bar the occasional and forgivable bit of subterfuge. The crucial role played by the local vicar (George Relph) and later his bishop (Godfrey Tearle) adds to the impression of a vanished world.

That said, *The Titfield Thunderbolt* has more going for it now than it did 60 years ago, the thinness the *Monthly Film Bulletin* complained about in April 1953 having been bulked out both by its prescience in anticipating the Beeching Axe (which fell a decade later) and motorway gridlock, and by the fact that it's now an irresistibly charming period piece, a fictional companion to the acclaimed travelogues that British Transport Films would produce throughout the decade. Stanley Holloway, a national institution himself, is on twinkling form as the local businessman who offers to fund the railway after realising its potential for hosting a mobile boozer. The train itself may dawdle at times, but former editor Charles Crichton keeps things moving briskly towards a conclusion that simultaneously marks a triumph for the Titfielders while putting them firmly in their parochial place.

Disc: This new high-definition transfer was clearly restored at considerable expense, and Douglas Slocombe's superb Technicolor cinematography looks almost lab-fresh even on the DVD (the Blu-ray wasn't supplied for



Hostage to misfortune: 'Something Wild'

review). A generous selection of extras includes a documentary, *The Lion Locomotive*, about the Victorian steam engine that played the title role when it was already a supercentenarian.

WARNER ARCHIVE FILM NOIR

MURDER IS MY BEAT

Edgar G. Ulmer; USA 1955; Warner Archive Collection/Region 1 NTSC DVD; 77 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.37:1

SCENE OF THE CRIME

Roy Rowland; USA 1953; Warner Archive Collection/Region 1 NTSC DVD; 94 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.37:1

CODE TWO

Fred M. Wilcox; USA 1949; Warner Archive Collection/Region 1 NTSC DVD; 69 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.37:1

Reviewed by Michael Atkinson

Noir, it seems, is forever – and inexhaustible. Here is a clutch liberated from the Warner vault, forgotten genre ditties that resound with noir's period anxieties and tropes and yet still manage to disarm you with unexpected secrets and strands of feeling.

Edgar Ulmer's melancholy drama *Murder Is My Beat*, as low-budgeted as anything he made in English, has J.K. Simmons lookalike Paul Langton, a weathered homicide cop, investigating a murder (the victim's face lost after being dragged into the fireplace) and falling for moll Barbara Payton, whose strangely neutral, childlike affect here only compounds her resonance as arguably the most chillingly dangerous of noir actresses. Ulmer's characteristic atomisation of objects, faces, reaction shots and cardboard locales (whether a matter of style or cheap movie-making efficiency or a bit of both) is heightened by the wall-to-wall use of back projection and stock footage, as if this movie was continuously crossing vectors with other movies, unable to find its way. Half disconnected found-footage daydream, half motel-room dirge, all glam as alley trash, it's quintessentially Ulmerian.

Fred Wilcox's *Code Two* is a formula motorcycle-cop flick, distinguished by Ralph Meeker, in his first lead, as an immature and cocky rookie joining LA's elite bike squad and growing up the hard way, and characterised by blossoms of grim violence, including a cop-killing by way of tractor trailer. But Roy Rowland's startlingly thoughtful *Scene of the Crime* may be the find, a police procedural thick with crazy street slang and tough talk which evolves slowly into a moral web, as detective Van Johnson, whose job keeps him in a constant state of interruptus with luscious

wife Arlene Dahl, attempts to find a cop killer in LA's bookie rackets by pretending to woo guileless burlesque singer Gloria DeHaven. Like many more celebrated noirs, Rowland's film is deceptively complex and densely populated with quirky life: John McIntire's old salt, Robert Gist's exasperated private dick, Norman Lloyd's irritating snitch and Tom Powers's erudite bookie don are the standouts. But the world is slowly turning upside down for do-the-right-thing Johnson, whose wife decides to leave him just as DeHaven's perfectly sweet floozie turns out to be her own opposite number, and as guilt turns into betrayal and the tension of not knowing what we don't know builds to one of noir's wildest Tommy-gun battles.

Discs: Standard archival-print transfer. No frills.

WILD RIVER

Elia Kazan; USA 1960; 20th Century Fox/Region A Blu-ray; 110 minutes; Aspect Ratio 2.35:1

Reviewed by Peter Tonguette

"Rugged individualism is our heritage," says Chuck Glover (Montgomery Clift) at the start of Elia Kazan's *Wild River*. It is the Great Depression, and he is the fair-haired boy of the Tennessee Valley Authority given the onerous job of cajoling the last islander along the perpetually flooding Tennessee River into selling her property. "We applaud that spirit, we admire it, we believe in it," Glover continues, as a disbelieving staff of secretaries (headed by Kazan's future wife, the delightful Barbara Loden) roll their eyes. "But we must get her the hell out of there."

The film is a series of duologues between Glover and the woman in question, Ella Garth (Jo Van Fleet), though at first he can barely manage to hold her attention. He gets no further than "Good afternoon, I'm from the TVA," before Ella stands up from the rocking chair on her dilapidated porch and walks inside. Glover means well, but besides a fighting spirit Ella has a poetic sensibility that makes Glover's literal-minded New Deal talking points sound puny. When he asks, "What will become of you?" after the waters come, he means in the strictly temporal sense (he has already lamely promised her "a radio and a modern kitchen" in the house the TVA will relocate her to). By way of answer, she takes him to the family plot, high atop a hill, where she is to be buried next to her late husband (and others) – that is what will become of her, and she is fine with it.

Ella has the same attachment to her land as the Smith family do to their homestead in *Meet Me in St Louis* (1944), and it's hard to argue with either. "I hate to see the summer go," says Carol (Lee Remick), Ella's granddaughter and eventually Glover's lover, expressing the difficulty of moving on. Kazan also leaves it to Carol to vocalise the sensible middle ground between Chuck's naive confidence in the TVA and Ella's retrograde defiance. When Carol joins Chuck on a ferry ride across the river, she tells him not to paddle because "the current will carry us across – slowly." That is how the TVA will get its way – ever so slowly.

Disc: The Blu-ray shows off Ellsworth Fredericks's beautiful cinematography.

DEATH VALLEY

Liquid Theory/Guitar & Pen Productions/MTV; USA 2011; Paramount Home Entertainment/Region 2 DVD; Certificate 15; 274 minutes; Aspect Ratio 16:9; Features: alternate pilot ending, character interviews, kill-shot count, music video

Reviewed by Sergio Angelini

The Walking Dead meets *Spinal Tap* in this reality-TV satire set in a ramshackle police department. Too knowing and self-referential to generate much in the way of genuine laughs, it proves unexpectedly solid when it comes to story, explicit gore and thematic underpinnings. One could in fact interpret the show as a media-savvy extrapolation on the theory of Schrödinger's cat, in which existential questions of whether something can be simultaneously alive and dead are imbricated by the presence of a camera crew documenting events. On the other hand it might be more sensible to take the path of least resistance and accept this simply as an exercise in high-concept genre hybridism.

A year after monsters descended on the San Fernando Valley, the officers of the UTF (Undead Task Force) have the job of keeping the supernatural creatures at bay. Vampires get the most respect, being presented as dangerous but also sexy and organised; werewolves are mostly comic foils; and zombies are mere cannon fodder, massacred every week in a variety of inventive and messy ways (one of the extras provides an onscreen kill count which reaches 117 by episode 12).

Most of the characters (and jokes) are on a par with the *Police Academy* movies (captain with boundary issues, libidinous young lead, assorted misfits, dim-but-muscle-bound African American etc) but the makeup effects are certainly up-to-date and the plotting is surprisingly deft given the one-joke premise, managing to keep the show surprisingly varied and engaging without too much visible strain.

Disc: The show makes no effort to distinguish aesthetically between 'objective' reality and video captured by the camera crew, and both look absolutely fine on disc. Extras are slight, though the original ending to the pilot, featuring Abe Vigoda as himself, is well worth sticking around for.

ENLIGHTENED – SEASON 1

Rip Cord Productions/HBO; USA 2011-12; Warner Home Video/Region 2 DVD; 290 minutes; Certificate 15; Aspect Ratio 16:9; Features: audio commentaries, featurettes

Reviewed by Sergio Angelini

This bittersweet HBO dramedy from dishevelled auteur Mike White opens spectacularly at the point of maximum humiliation for Amy Jellicoe (Laura Dern, also the series's co-creator) as she goes through an office meltdown of positively Wagnerian proportions after being demoted. After several months of rehab in Hawaii she returns to work imbued with a life-changing zeal and a renewed sense of self – and only her monstrous egotism blinds her to the reasons why nobody else at work seems to care. Once again shunted out of the limelight, she is sent to work in a basement with other 'problem' staff members. Her attempts to change the cutthroat culture of the company prove ineffective, while at home things aren't



Enlightened This bittersweet HBO dramedy opens spectacularly with an office meltdown of positively Wagnerian proportions

much better, with her stoner ex-husband (Luke Wilson) refusing to give up drugs. The show is strongest when showing the pain beneath the surface tension, most notably in an atypical episode devoted entirely to a day in the life of Amy's mother (Diane Ladd, Dern's real-life mother); its exploration of the reasons for her emotional reticence is brilliantly handled.

Disc: White provides useful micro introductions to all the episodes and also appears with Dern on three of the four audio commentaries.

UNIT ONE – SERIES 1

DR TV-Drama/DR1; Denmark 2000; Arrow/Region 2 DVD; Certificate 15; 512 minutes; Aspect Ratio 16:9

Reviewed by Sergio Angelini

This Danish police procedural (known as *Rejseholdet* on its own turf) moves at considerable speed – even the team's office is on wheels. First shown in 2000, it made a star of Mads Mikkelsen – as the unit's dedicated wild card he gets most of the good lines, though strictly speaking he plays second fiddle to Charlotte Fich's arrogant, ambitious and tragic heroine Ingrid Dahl. Initially meeting with hostility when she takes over *pro tem* as the team's new boss after a stint in internal affairs,

she quickly wins their respect and becomes Denmark's first female homicide chief.

The investigations, ostensibly derived from real flying-squad cases, feature the standard retinue of criminal elements – psychotic black widow, mother-obsessed rapist, gangland turf wars etc – contrasted with soapsuds on the home front. Ingrid in particular gets more than her fair share of domestic drama, with a fiancé so saintly that he might as well have a target hanging round his neck (he is soon mowed down by a hit-and-run driver). Oddly enough, the rare intimate scenes featuring the criminals at home often prove more restrained and more effective by comparison in their pull on the heartstrings.

The two-part finale, directed with considerable élan by Catherine Sieling (later a mainstay of such superior Danish dramas as *The Killing*, *Borgen* and *The Bridge*), caps this debut season (it ran for four years) with a rare instance of failure for the team, giving the first inkling that this show might offer something a bit more substantial than the usual cops-and-robbers catch and release.

Disc: Made entirely on video, the image occasionally looks a little ragged, but generally the results are pleasing. Ⓢ



Stick 'em up: John Ford's first feature-length work 'Straight Shooting', from 1917, is the start point for the book's discussion of the director's 'painterly' work

ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WEST

RIDE, BOLDLY RIDE

The Evolution of the American Western

By Mary Lea Bandy and Kevin Stoehr, University of California Press, 344 pp, £26.95, ISBN 9780520258662

Reviewed by Nick Pinkerton

Some time ago I visited, at New York City's Metropolitan Museum, an exhibition of American paintings of everyday scenes covering the period 1765 to 1915. In the interest of providing chastening history lessons, the labels for nearly every canvas managed to chide the wayward past from the enlightened perspective of today. No-one, however, made out worse than Frederic Remington, the quintessential painter of the Old West, whose 1903 *Fight for the Water Hole* was put on trial for everything from xenophobia to genocide.

This has frequently been the fate of the American movie western in recent studies, ever since 'manifest destiny' – once taken

to connote boundless idealism – became a dirty phrase. Mary Lea Bandy and Kevin Stoehr's chronology of the American western, *Ride, Boldly Ride* – which discusses movies set, roughly, in the span of years mentioned above – goes some way toward reversing this trend, acknowledging and interfacing with texts such as *Invisible Natives: Myth and Identity in the American Western* and *Cowboys as Cold Warriors* while blazing its own trail.

Bandy and Stoehr take the approach of a necessarily selective, roughly chronological survey in order to cover the century-plus span between the 1894 scenes from Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show shot at the Edison lab and *Cowboys and Aliens* (2011), cited as dubious grounds for optimism over the possibilities of the postmodern western. The films the authors have chosen to highlight split the difference between the epochal old standbys (*Red River*, *The Wild Bunch*), and more idiosyncratic choices. Bandy and Stoehr single out Delmer Daves's 1956 *Jubal*, for example, as the prototypical "psychological western" – which in fact it is, to the point of parody. Elsewhere they make a persuasive claim for the charms

of Howard Hawks's 1966 *El Dorado* over its better-loved precursor, 1958's *Rio Bravo* – the book takes its title from a line in E.A. Poe's poem 'Eldorado', recited in the film by James Caan.

Some movies whose settings are outliers on the timeline are reclaimed as westerns, such as King Vidor's French and Indian War-set *Northwest Passage* of 1940, and Leo McCarey's 1908-set *Ruggles of Red Gap* of 1935, discussed in a chapter dedicated to the comic western. Most interestingly, a case is made for the consideration of 1928's Lillian Gish vehicle *The Wind* as a western, the centrepiece of a chapter called 'Women against the frontier', which discusses the film's collective authorship by Gish, novelist Frances Marion and screenwriter Dorothy Scarborough, as well as affinities between the American western and the man-against-nature-oriented Scandinavian cinema from which director Victor Sjöström's had come. (A fair point – there are few greater novels about what we think of as "frontier life" than Norwegian Knut Hamsun's 1920 *Growth of the Soil*.)

Ms. Bandy was for 30 years the chief curator of film at New York's Museum of Modern Art,

and this has presumably helped in allowing the authors free access to the MoMA stills collection, making for an unusually generously illustrated study. These images have an eloquence that frequently eludes the text; if free of gristly jargon that might scare off a genre-studies tenderfoot, the prose sometimes lapses into perfect blandness – 1969's *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* "features some hilarious lines of dialogue", we are told, "and occasions frequent smiles because of the antics of its charismatic leads". A description of an opening image in William Wyler's 1940 *The Westerner*, meanwhile, leaves us to wonder what, precisely, a "cloud-covered desert" might look like. The authors are frequently waylaid by mere coincidences of casting and personnel, or into repeating familiar litanies of thematically related movies – a list of "Indian-friendly" westerns, for example – that one can recite by heart once done with the book. And while the authors take time to give lip-service to painters of the Old West – Charles Russell, Albert Bierstadt, Charles Schreyvogel and, yes, Remington – in a chapter called 'Landscape and standard setting in the 1930s western', this doesn't open

The book's images have an eloquence that frequently eludes the text, which sometimes lapses into perfect blandness

the way to much more than the application of that vague adjective 'painterly', nearly as abused as 'cinematic'. This talk of painters is all the more disappointing as it precedes the authors' discussion of the use of an early 70mm Widescreen process, Grandeur, on Raoul Walsh's 1930 *The Big Trail*, a discussion which wholly fails to note that many of those very painters in fact favoured a "Widescreen" canvas.

Bandy and Stoehr are in best form during their exegesis of John Ford's 'painterly' films, an engagement with which runs practically the entire length of the book, beginning with his 1917 *Straight Shooting* and ending with 1962's *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, "perhaps the most meaningful, the most tragic, and the most emotionally powerful of all western films". Addressing Jim Kitses's critique of Ford's *Fort Apache* from his classic study *Horizons West* – that it "is a film of antithetical energies, a liberal critique of militarism that culminates in a conservative defence of tradition" – the authors respond, rightly, that "this double-edged treatment should be appreciated for its complicating of the story of the cavalry – not to mention the story of American idealism." (There is later a similarly spirited defense of the multitudinous personalities of Clint Eastwood, who provides the book with a brief introduction.) Indeed, the primary merit of *Ride, Boldly Ride* lies in its grasping one essential point: the greatest westerns should be loved not in spite of their contradictions, but because of them. ⑥

MAMOULIAN: LIFE ON STAGE AND SCREEN

By David Lührssen, University Press of Kentucky, 192pp, £33.95, ISBN 9780813136769

Reviewed by Geoff Andrew

It might be argued that Rouben Mamoulian – who was born in Tiflis, Georgia in 1897, and died 90 years later in Los Angeles, three decades after the release of *Silk Stockings*, the last film he managed to complete – is now the most underrated of all Hollywood directors. Indeed, some of us not only consider this erudite, sophisticated Armenian to have been one of the greatest practitioners of American cinema during the first decade or so of the sound era, but believe he mostly continued to produce very fine work thereafter. Sadly, however, even his best-known films are seldom seen these days, especially on the big screen where their virtues are most apparent; and even on those rare occasions when his career is discussed, his achievements are routinely described along the lines of the oft-quoted assessment proffered in Andrew Sarris's *The American Cinema*: "Mamoulian's tragedy is that of the innovator who runs out of innovations." Read what follows in Sarris's frustratingly brief summary of Mamoulian's oeuvre and you may wonder how many of the films he'd seen recently enough to make a proper judgement. Still, the book was highly influential, and the damage done.

The current critical neglect makes a new book on Mamoulian extremely welcome; until now, we've had only Tom Milne's concise but excellent critical account of his films, published in 1969 but long unavailable until a second edition appeared in 2010. Lührssen's book is primarily biographical rather than focused on the films themselves; that's useful, because Mamoulian was as central to the development of the American musical theatre during the first half of the last century as he was to that of the talkies. If cinephiles are at all aware of Mamoulian, what they're most likely to know



Seeing the light: Rouben Mamoulian

is that his first feature, *Applause*, deployed an unusually mobile camera; that its successor, *City Streets*, made inventive use of sound; that *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* boasted 'subjective' camera, split screen and innovative use of make-up and photographic filters; that for her very eloquent final close-up in *Queen Christina* the director told Garbo to display no emotion; and that *Becky Sharp* was the first Technicolor feature. What they may not know is that in 1927, shortly after Mamoulian arrived in New York, he attained great critical and commercial success directing an all-black theatrical adaptation of DuBose Heyward's novel *Porgy* on Broadway; that his last significant stage job before leaving for Hollywood was directing a Metropolitan Opera House production of Schoenberg's drama mit musik *Die glückliche Hand*; and that, even after establishing himself in Hollywood, he continued to exercise his theatrical skills on the East Coast, directing premieres of landmark works such as *Porgy and Bess*, *Oklahoma!* and *Carousel*.

Lührssen covers the theatrical side of Mamoulian's career in greater detail than he does the film side; indeed, for all his enthusiasm for many of the movies, one suspects that that may be where his real interest lies. This has its advantages (reading about Mamoulian's stylised stage productions sheds valuable light on his distinctively rhythmic and choreographic approach to cinematic *mise-en-scène*) and its inevitable disadvantages (neither we nor the writer are able to see and judge the theatrical productions for ourselves). That unevenness is characteristic of the book as a whole. Where Lührssen has been able to immerse himself in the well-documented aspects of his subject's life – primarily through the Mamoulian papers held by the Library of Congress – he confidently relates a fascinating story; but when only shakier evidence is available, as seems to have been the case for Mamoulian's early years in Transcaucasia, Paris, Moscow, London and Rochester, the writing may slip into slightly woolly surmise (unsurprising, perhaps, given the less than trustworthy tone of Mamoulian's own published reminiscences) or turn into little more than a list of theatrical productions.

But it would be churlish to overemphasise the book's shortcomings. While it's not exactly rich in astute insights or critical content, it provides enough well-researched (if sometimes awkwardly assembled) material on his dealings both with the Hollywood establishment and with various key figures in American music, theatre, dance and literature to enhance and deepen our understanding of how Mamoulian's films came into being (or not, of course, as was famously the case with *Laura*, *Porgy and Bess* and *Cleopatra*). In particular, we see how Mamoulian was effectively the co-creator of several popular classics, rewriting and reshaping their narratives as well as developing the eloquently kinetic style of staging that made his name. That's interesting, not least for those of us who feel that his work in film suggests that he was not merely a *metteur-en-scène* but, in his own modest but subtle way, an auteur.

FRAMING PICTURES

Film and the visual arts

By Steven Jacobs, Edinburgh University Press, 224pp, £19.99, ISBN 9780748668762

Reviewed by Isabel Stevens

Given the number of artist documentaries on the big screen recently (on such figures as Ai Weiwei and Marina Abramović), and the enduring popularity of the artist biopic (Mike Leigh's film on Turner and Michael Mann's on Robert Capa are two in the pipeline), not to mention the increasing number of artists working with the moving image as well as those rummaging in cinema's archive, Steven Jacobs's exploration of where film and the visual arts intermingle is a timely one.

Unfortunately the result isn't as focused as his excellent study of Hitchcock and architecture (entitled *The Wrong House*). Condensing such a mammoth topic into six chapters covering such diverse areas as artist biopics, the film still and museums in the movies was only ever going to

result in a very selective overview. Indeed some of the subjects of these essays could make (and in the case of Hitchcock and contemporary art, already have) books in their own right.

Still, Jacobs finds fresh ground even on subjects, such as the film still, which have been extensively written about. His analysis of how the tableau vivant has been borrowed by cinema is equally incisive.

Of particular note are his examinations of artist documentaries and biopics. When exploring the former, he points to many little-seen curiosities, from portraits of artists at work made in the silent era to the celluloid studies of Italian director Luciano Emmer. And he focuses particularly on those vital, inventive works that exploit cinema's capacity to analyse art works in an original and specifically filmic manner – Alain Resnais's early shorts on Van Gogh and 'Guernica' in particular.

Jacobs is particularly adept at setting the scene before delving into more intricate and thoughtful observations: highlighting those docs that take on their subject's style (In *Guernica*, he notes, Resnais makes a cubist montage of his own, splintering



Picasso's 'Guernica', subject of a Resnais short

Picasso's painting into 178 shots).

Similarly on the subject of biopics he wisely concentrates on those films (Eric's *The Quince Tree Sun* among them) that elucidate on an artist's methodology as opposed to those that just lazily re-tread the myth of the painter as an impoverished, eccentric outsider.

The only pity is the limited scope of the films surveyed, which in the case of the documentaries doesn't go beyond modernism, and for the biopics stops in the early 90s. **S**

HOLLYWOOD CINEMA AND THE REAL LOS ANGELES

By Mark Shiel, Reaktion Books, 336pp, £25, ISBN 9781861899026

Reviewed by Nick Bradshaw

Maybe it's a sign of Hollywood's ebbing powers – or the migration of its black-box aura of fictive wizardry into the digital realm – but it seems we no longer take Tinseltown's claims to untouchable illusionism at face value. Nor do we their flipside, the sneer that Los Angeles is a city without history. Images – photorealistic images – have provenance; they also leave their mark. Lately a clutch of historians have lined up to play Dorothy to the dream factory's Oz, pulling back the curtains on the real city that both underpins and most hungrily consumes its smoke-and-mirrors spectacles.

Jan Olsson's *Los Angeles before Hollywood: Journalism and American Film Culture, 1905 to 1915* (2009) records the growth of movies as entertainment through their relationship with the print media of the young city as it embraced them. Jumping a century, Stephen Barber's *Abandoned Images: Film and Film's End* (2010) takes the remnants of imperial Los Angeles' screen glut – a dozen sundered movie theatres still standing downtown – as cue for a dirge to cinema as we've known it. 2011 saw John Bengtson's *Silent Visions: Discovering Early Hollywood and New York Through the Films of Harold Lloyd*, the third of his nuttily forensic mappings of silent comedies onto their real-world locations (following similar tomes on Keaton and Chaplin). And last year brought this tome from Barber's fellow UK academic Mark Shiel, which sets out to marry the history of the city with that of its cinema through the rise and fall of the Hollywood studio system over the first half of the last century.

Of course, the insight, here and in Bengtson's books, that fictional films offer

documentary disclosures was also the premise of Thom Andersen's video essay *Los Angeles Plays Itself* (2004), an obvious antecedent that goes perplexingly unmentioned amid Shiel's reams of references. Scholarly (but quite readable), his book doesn't have the acerbic thrust of Andersen's polemic, but makes good on its undertaking, extending the study of Los Angeles' transformative *pas de deux* with the movies into areas from studio design and planning (even unto used-furniture sales!) to the war on film labour.

Shiel organises his chapters around four genres that index Los Angeles, and four corresponding "spatial motifs". 'The Trace' takes the city as a palimpsest, excavating vestiges of the pre-modern Los Angeles, and the first seeds of the movie colony, in the shorts of West Coast film pioneers like Griffith and the De Milles. There's a salient note on film's paradoxical ability to efface and erase

He sets out to marry the history of Los Angeles with that of its cinema through the rise and fall of the Hollywood studio system



Shooting the city: 'Pulp Fiction'

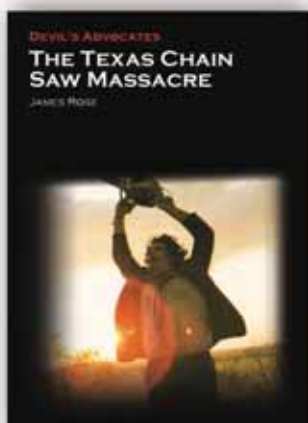
as well as record – in this case through elision of the city's non-anglo cultures – and a ritual lament for "the fragility of our historical understanding of the city [echoing] the fragility of celluloid itself" (though for what it's worth, the newspaper archives clearly report a screening at the Orpheum nearly three weeks earlier than Shiel's "earliest screening we know of" at Tally's Kinetoscope Parlor).

'Navigation' has great fun with the slapstick bravado of Chaplin, Lloyd and Laurel and Hardy, whose pellmell comedies describe "the comical efforts of citizens to orient themselves" in Los Angeles' "peculiarly automobilised and decentured urban and suburban environments". Of course, the films finally embraced and advertised the capitalist acceleration they satirised – and their gender/race/class biases are blindingly obvious, though Shiel himself neglects putative alternative voices like Dorothy Devore.

'The Simulacrum' broaches Hollywood's newfound imperial pomp through the sound era's inward turn to studio filming, and the vogue for that most solipsistic (not to mention triumphalist) genre, the movie-movie. And 'Geopolitical Pressure Point' charts the city's post-war rise, when the cameras returned to the streets, as the explicit setting of an increasing number of *films noir*, before sketching some tantalisingly *noir-ish* allegations of studio bosses' use of both biddable politicians and mafiosi to frustrate labour unrest.

"Los Angeles used to be the city of the future; now it's a future that's come and gone," Andersen once told me. Shiel's thesis – that Los Angeles has exported its privatised fragmentation and postmodern evasiveness around the world – finds a hint of closure in a provocative epilogue, where he glimpses a turn from those sprawling palliatives of the 90s (*Short Cuts*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Magnolia*) to small-scale, "low carbon" (if still white middle-class) dramas like *In Search of a Midnight Kiss* (2007) – and links them to moves to redevelop Los Angeles on a greener footing. Can Hollywood get out of the car? **S**

Read



THE TEXAS CHAIN SAW MASSACRE

By James Rose, Auteur 'Devil's Advocates' series, 106pp, paperback, illustrated, £9.99, ISBN 9781906733643

An intense fever dream (or nightmare), nearly 40 years after its release the original *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) remains remarkable for its sense of sustained threat and depiction of an insane but nonetheless (dys)functional family on the furthest reaches of society. As well as providing a summary of the making of this true classic, James Rose discusses the extraordinary censorship history of the film in the UK and provides a detailed textual analysis of the film with particular reference to the concept of 'the uncanny'. He also situates the film in the context of horror film criticism and discusses its influence and subsequent sequels, remakes and reboots.

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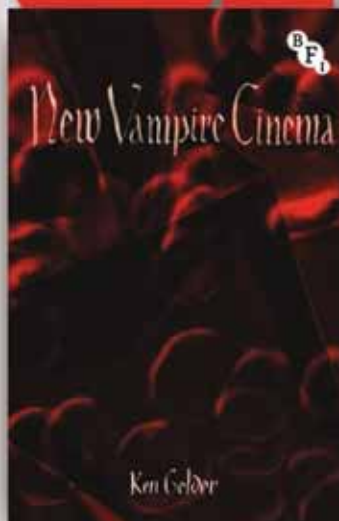
INDIE 2.0

Change and Continuity in Contemporary American Indie Film

By Geoff King, IB Tauris, 288pp, paperback, £16.99, ISBN 9781848853171

What is the state of American indie cinema in the second decade of the 21st century? Geoff King explores new opportunities for indie films, including the use of low-cost digital video and the pursuit of the internet and social media as alternative means of funding, distribution, promotion and sales. Other detailed case studies focus on the ultra-low-budget 'mumblecore' movement; the social realism of filmmakers such as Kelly Reichardt and Ramin Bahrani; the 'digital desktop' aesthetics of Susan Buice and Arin Crumley's *Four Eyed Monsters*, and crossover hits such as *Little Miss Sunshine* and *Juno*.

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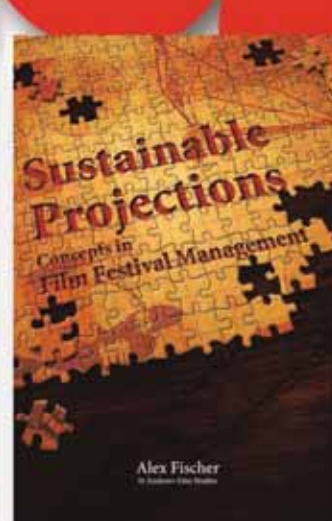


NEW VAMPIRE CINEMA

By Ken Gelder, BFI Publishing/Palgrave Macmillan, 168pp, paperback, illustrated, £16.99, ISBN 9781844574407

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CHARULATA



The closing shots of Satyajit Ray's 1964 film eloquently and wordlessly capture a marriage at a crossroads

By Philip Kemp

Two hands, a man's and a woman's, reach tentatively out to each other. But just before they meet, the frame freezes. Reconciliation? Maybe not just yet...

Charulata (1964) is the subtlest and most delicate of Satyajit Ray's chamber dramas, and his own favourite among his films. It's adapted from the novella *Nastanirh* by the titan of modern Bengali literature, Rabindranath Tagore – at whose 'world university' of Santiniketan Ray studied – and is set, like so many of Ray's movies, in his native Calcutta.

We're in the early 1880s, and the intellectual ferment of the Bengali Renaissance is at its height. Among the educated middle classes there's talk of self-determination for India within the British Empire – perhaps even of complete independence. Such ideas are often aired in the liberal English-language weekly of which Bhupati Dutta (Sailen Mukherjee) is owner and editor. A kindly man, but distracted by his all-absorbing political interests, he largely leaves his wife, the graceful and intelligent Charulata (Madhabi Mukherjee), to her own resources.

In a long, near-wordless sequence early in the film we see Charu, trapped in the stuffy, brocaded cage of her house, trying to distract herself. She leafs through a book, discards it, selects another – then, hearing noises outside in the street, finds her opera glasses and flits birdlike from window to

window watching the passers-by. When Bhupati wanders past, too engrossed in a book to notice her, she turns her glasses on him too – just another strange specimen from the intriguing, unattainable outside world.

Becoming vaguely aware of Charu's discontent, Bhupati invites her brother Umapada and his wife Mandakini to stay. Umapada offers his services as manager of the journal's finances; but Mandakini, a feather-headed chatterbox, is poor company for her sister-in-law. Then Bhupati's young cousin Amal (Soumitra Chatterjee) arrives for a visit. Lively, enthusiastic, an aspiring writer, he establishes an immediate rapport with Charu that on both sides drifts insensibly towards love.

'Calm Without, Fire Within', the title of Ray's essay on Japanese cinema, could equally well (as Bengali critic Chidananda Das Gupta noted) apply to *Charulata*. The emotional turbulence that underlies the film is conveyed in hints and gestures, in a sidelong glance or a snatch of song, often betraying feelings only half-recognised by the person experiencing them. In a key scene set in the sunlit garden, Amal lies prone on a mat seeking inspiration, while Charu swings herself high above him, singing, rapt in the ecstasy of her newfound intellectual and erotic stimulation. Ray, as Robin Wood observed, "is one of the cinema's great masters of interrelatedness".

To a Western audience, all three members of the triangle might seem impossibly naive.

The emotional turbulence that underlies the film is conveyed in hints and gestures, in a sidelong glance or a snatch of song

This would be a cultural misapprehension. In Bengali society, as Ray pointed out in an article in *Sight & Sound*, a playfully flirtatious relationship between a wife and her *debar* (her husband's younger brother or cousin) is accepted. Charu and Amal have simply slipped, half-unknowingly, across an ill-defined social border.

While Bhupati hosts a musical evening to celebrate the election of a Liberal government at Westminster (Gladstone's Liberals, he believes, will be more favourably disposed to their cause), Umapada, who has been systematically defrauding his trusting brother-in-law, absconds with all the journal's funds. Amal, conscious that he too has been contemplating a betrayal, hastily departs. And Bhupati, inadvertently witnessing Charu's irrepressible outburst of grief, realises what's been happening.

In the film's final scene Bhupati, whom we last saw sitting weeping in a horse-drawn cab, returns in the evening to the house. Charu, who knows he overheard her reaction to Amal's farewell letter, is waiting for him, dreading his response. Hearing his steps, she goes to the door and opens it. The two gaze at each other for a long moment before Charu says quietly "Come in." She reaches out her hand; Bhupati hesitates, then reaches out also – and the screen freezes on a shot of the two hands, close yet not joined. Ray pulls back in a series of freeze-frames – the couple, their eyes locked together, the elderly servant bringing in the lamp – until all three figures are frozen in longshot at the end of the veranda as Ray's *tanpura* score rises in a plangent crescendo. On the screen appears the title of Tagore's story: *Nastanirh* (*The Broken Nest*). But it is irretrievably broken? Ray, subtle and unprescriptive as ever, leaves that for us to decide. **Ⓢ**

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